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ABSTRACT

This handbook contains a collections of nine articles on the subject of direct-response advertising. The handbook gives advice on how to create effective advertisements for home study courses. The nine articles are the following: "Overview of Home Study Advertising in the 1990s" (Michael P. Lambert); "Ad Features that Sell" (Nancie E. Robertson); "How to Write Direct Marketing Headlines" (Axel Andersson); "How to Write Ad Copy" (Colleen McGuire); "Testing Home Study Advertising" (John F. Thompson); "Effective Tracking and Measurement in Direct Response Advertising" (Richard A. Kruger); "Creating a Winning Home Study Ad" (Erick Scheiderman); "Working with Media Sales Representatives" (Jim Valentine); and "Television Advertising" (James K. Isenhour). The handbook also includes "A Suggested Reading List for Home Study Marketers" (Axel Andersson) that lists and describes 15 books and magazines in the advertising and direct mail fields. (KC)

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Home Study

Advertising Handbook

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National Home Study Council

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Home Study

Advertising Handbook

National Home Study Council

Home Study
Advertising Handbook

Edited by
Michael P. Lambert
and
Sally R. Welch

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The National Home Study Council (NHSC), a voluntary association of accredited home study schools, was founded in 1926 to promote sound educational standards and ethical business practices within the home study field. The independent NHSC Accrediting Commission is listed by the United States Department of Education as a "nationally recognized accediting agency." The Accrediting Commission is also a recognized member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA).

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Introduction

The National Home Study Council is proud to issue this third Handbook in its series of guides to sound practice in correspondence education.

The *Home Study Advertising Handbook* represents the first collection of articles published by the NHSC on the subject of direct response advertising. The authors of the nine chapters in this Handbook are practicing experts in the home study field. They willingly share their insights on a variety of fascinating topics, from writing ad copy to tracking ad results.

The emphasis in this Handbook is on giving readers the most practical, contemporary, "real world" advice on how to create effective ads for home study courses.

The National Home Study Council is deeply indebted to the authors of the chapters you are about to read, and the NHSC expresses its warmest gratitude for their superb contributions to the advancement of the home study field.

We would be remiss if we failed to acknowledge the many excellent suggestions for this Handbook given by Mr. Axel Andersson, who assisted the editors at every step of the way and also contributed a chapter on writing effective headlines. We are truly grateful for all of Mr. Andersson's contributions to this project.

We hope that you will find this Handbook useful and we welcome your comments about it.

Michael P. Lambert
Executive Director
September 1993

We urge you to acquire the other two Handbooks in the NHSC series, one on course development and another on student services. An order form is bound into the back of this Handbook for your convenience.

Chapter One

Overview of Home Study Advertising in the 1990s

by
Michael P. Lambert
Executive Director
National Home Study Council

The Author

Michael Lambert holds graduates degrees in Business Administration and in English. He joined the NHSC in 1972 as Accrediting Program Coordinator, was named Assistant Director in 1977, Associate Director in 1987, and Executive Director in 1992.

Mike has served on more than 400 accreditation examination committees. He has authored or edited numerous books and articles on correspondence education and accreditation, including correspondence courses on business writing, new course planning, and the NHSC business standards.

Introduction

Home study educators are fond of pointing out that the first ad for a correspondence course in the U.S. was a small classified ad in the *Boston Gazette* in 1728 which read:

> *N.B. Any Persons in the Country desirous to Learn this Art, may by having the several Lessons sent Weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston.*

Thus, the stage was set over 265 years ago for one of the enduring appeals of studying at a distance: **convenience** for the education consumer.

"Convenience" remains the primary attraction of home study as we approach the 21st century. The astounding technological advances of the past decade point up the convenience factor even more: it is becoming easier to pursue a well-organized study of most skills and academic subjects because of the new technology. This fact suggests that the future of distance education will be brighter than ever, and that home study marketers should have gainful employment for some time to come.

One of the enduring traditions of marketing correspondence courses is based upon what correspondence study historian Dr. Von Pittman of the University of Iowa calls the "Jacksonian ideal" which holds that every citizen deserves to have an equal opportunity to improve his or her station in life through education. Home study has been called "The American Way to Learn" for exactly this reason. The appeals in the ads from 1900 through World War II usually included the idea that the common citizen could seize control of his own future by enrolling in a correspondence course.

This "Hortio Alger" theme can be seen in home study ads dating back to the turn of the century. These ads implied that the American dream was truly a possibility for any "man" (appeals to women came later); anyone with initiative could climb the ladder of success. The ads used phrases like "Some day you'll be considered for a good job," and "Jobs like these go to men who know radio." Most of the ads held out the promise of financial success and the many rewards which are available to those with proper training.

One of the most famous ads in all marketing history—although not particularly money-making—was the 1926 classic for the U.S. School of Music by John Caples, which had the headline "They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano, But When I Started to Play!" Home study had secured a permanent part in the nation's folklore.

Home Study Marketing Today

Home study marketing is much more than ad headlines, of course. The marketing function is an integrated effort by an institution to convince an individual (or business) to enroll in a corre-

spondence course. This effort includes the use of a variety of ads and promotional announcements, including such tactical efforts as:

- Newspaper ads
- Magazine ads
- Take one cards
- Envelope "stuffers"
- Insert cards
- Public relations releases
- TV and radio spots
- Poster announcements
- Yellow page ads
- Other print and non-print media

The common goal of all ads is to get the reader to act, to convince the reader to enroll in a course of study by inviting them to request "free" information/literature.

It is rare for an ad to invite direct "enrollment"—and it is likewise unusual for ads to disclose the course tuition. Only a few, low tuition courses have been offered this way, and the results have been uneven at best.

Following receipt of the prospective enrollee's expression of interest ("a lead" or an "inquiry"), the marketing effort then switches gears to its presentation mode. Today, the majority of presentations use print materials such as course catalogs, flyers, etc. A few schools use in-home sales representatives, and others use a combination of print materials and school-initiated telephone presentations to inquirers.

Whatever the tactic employed, the goal is the same: to convince the inquirer to enroll in the course.

The art of home study marketing is best appreciated when one considers the total picture of the marketing effort: the ad, the follow-up materials and the closing of the sale. Each decision to enroll involves an indefinable mixture of effective sales appeal and consumer decision making. A mystical bond of trust between the prospect and the school takes place each time a student enrolls. Attempts to dissect this transaction of offer and acceptance are sure to be frustrated. Home study marketers know what seems to work almost intuitively, but they test their marketing tactics, offers and techniques on a continuous basis in an endless search for

the optimum technique. The striking fact is that home study marketers are successful in convincing people to send significant sums of money to a distant school to buy a "product,' sight unseen! Few direct response marketers can boast of being able to sell $900, $1,500 and even $4,000 intangible products through the mails.

The NHSC surveyed its membership in 1993 on their current marketing practices. Some 70% of the membership responded to the survey. The summary of the results of this survey were:

1. Schools send "fulfillment" mail an average of five times to an inquiry over a period of about 10 months (i.e., an initial mailing plus four follow-up mailings).

2. Schools are able to convert more than 13% of their leads on average.

3. The average cost of an inquiry is almost $9.

4. The average cost per enrollment is $188.

5. The average percent of stated tuition collected is 58%.

6. The average downpayment on a course is $146, and the average monthly payment is almost $70.

7. Most schools—about 90%—use mail order methods to enroll students. Only 10% use sales representatives.

8. The most often used materials in fulfillment are color catalogs, color brochures, letters and bonus flyers, with letters being the most popular.

9. The most popular publications media used to generate inquiries are general publications followed by topical publications.

Business Standards

We must not overlook the importance of the *NHSC Business Standards* and the vital role they play in controlling how schools may advertise.

The *Business Standards* Section 1 A and B are time-tested prescriptions for ethical advertising practices. They are the result of more

than six decades of continuous refinement by peer group experts. There is a "story" behind each of these standards. Home study marketers (from accredited schools) are obligated to observe these standards.

Appendix A lists Sections 1 A and B of the *Business Standards,* and Appendix B is an excerpt of a portion of the Rating Form for Examiners listing the 13 question schools are rated on in their advertising practice.

The Handbook

The balance of this Handbook presents a variety of chapters from marketing experts who have wide experience in home study education.

We hope that you will find these chapters illuminating and helpful. The NHSC takes great pride in presenting, for the first time in an NHSC Handbook, such in-depth treatment of marketing in home study.

Appendix A

NHSC Business Standards

Business Standards are a part of the Accrediting Commission's overall standards for accredited schools. The policies, procedures, practices and activities of an accredited school must be in compliance with these Standards. In reviewing an accredited school, the Examining Committee members will determine adherence to the Business Standards.

Newly accredited schools must come into compliance with the Standards upon gaining accreditation. The Business Standards prescribe the minimum policies accredited schools must observe in all phases of school operations.

Schools must also conform to the provisions of applicable laws and regulations and these governmental regulations take precedence if there is a variance with the Business Standards.

Business Standards

Section I: School and Course Promotion

A. Advertising and Promotional Literature

1. Each advertisement or piece of promotional literature written or used by a school must be completely truthful and must not give any false, misleading or exaggerated impression with respect to the school, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates.

2. All advertising and promotional literature used by a school must clearly indicate that training or education is being offered.

3. All advertising and promotional literature must include the full and correct name and location of the school and disclose the fact that home study training or education is given. In addition, the local address of a sales representative may be used. Advertisements that do not identify the school by name ("blind ads") cannot be used.

4. The school's address must appear in catalogs, enrollment agreements, promotional literature and official NHSC listings. For this purpose, a Post Office Box number will not be considered an address.

5. Testimonials of endorsement, commendation or recommendation may be used in school catalogs, advertisements and promotional literature provided that they portray currently correct conditions or facts and provided that the writer's prior consent is obtained and no remuneration is made for either the consent or use of the endorsement. Such letters shall be kept on file and available for inspection.

6. To enroll students, a school will not use advertisements or promotional material which are classified, designated, or captioned "men and/or women wanted to train for . . . ," "help wanted," "employment," "business opportunities," or words or terms of similar import which represent directly or by implication that employment is being offered.

7. Schools using classified columns of newspapers or other publications to enroll students must use only those columns headed "education," "schools," or "instruction." "Help wanted," "employment," or "business opportunities" classifications may be used only to advertise for employees or sales representatives for the school.

8. The use of the following words is restricted or prohibited:

   a. The word "Free" shall not be used to describe any item or service regularly included as a part of the school's course or services.

   b. The word "Guarantee" shall not be used by a school for advertising or promotional purposes.

B. School and Course Recognition

1. The school may use the fact of accreditation in its advertising, promotional literature or letterheads only in the following manner:

   a. Use of the official Accredited School Seal.

NHSC Business Standards, Section 1 A and B

Appendix B

VIII. Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Sales Representatives

Yes	No	A. Advertising and Promotion
		Advertising, promotional literature, and sales representatives of home study institutions make only clear and provable statements fully within the spirit of the NHSC Business Standards. Advertising in magazines, newspapers, on the radio or on television must be ethical in every respect. Flamboyant statements, emphasis on short-cuts or any statement of fact or by inference which is offensive to public educational authorities or to the general public are not to be employed in advertising or selling.
____	____	1. Is each advertisement or piece of promotional literature written or used by the school completely truthful?
____	____	2. Does all literature preclude giving any false, misleading or exaggerated impression with respect to the school, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates?
____	____	3. Does all advertising and promotional literature used by a school clearly indicate that training or education is being offered?
____	____	4. Does all advertising and promotional literature include the full and correct name and location of the school and disclose the fact that home study training or education is given?
____	____	5. Does the school's address appear in catalogs, enrollment agreements, promotional literature and official NHSC listings? For this purpose, a Post Office Box number alone will not be considered an address.
____	____	6. Do testimonials of endorsement, commendation or recommendation used in school catalogs, advertisements and promotional literature portray currently correct conditions or facts? Has the writer's prior consent been obtained and is no remuneration made for use of the endorsement?
____	____	7. Do advertisements and promotional material make it clear that "education" or "training," not employment, is being offered? Do advertisements appearing in classified sections of newspapers appear in columns headed "education," "schools" or "instruction" and not in "help wanted," "career opportunity," "employment" or "business opportunity" columns?
____	____	8. Is the word "Free" avoided to describe any item or service offered by the school as a regular part of the course? Is the word "Guarantee" avoided?
____	____	9. Does the promotional literature factually describe placement services, if offered?
____	____	10. Can the school demonstrate the availability of jobs which it mentions in its literature? Do placement figures compare with claims made in recent school literature?
____	____	11. Does the school refer to its accreditation in the precise language specified in the NHSC Business Standards?
____	____	12. Does reference to federal or state loan, grant or other benefit programs adhere to the regulations set forth by the appropriate agency?
____	____	13. Does the school avoid the use of misleading designs, colors, brochures, emblems, uniforms, etc.?
____	____	**Meets Standard VIII.A. overall.**

Section VIII, Advertising and Promotional Literature/Control of Sales Representatives from the "Examiner's Rating Form—All Institutions."

Appendix A continued

b. Use of the statement, with or without the official seal:

Accredited Member
National Home Study Council
or
Accredited Member NHSC

c. Use of the statement, with or without the official seal:

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission
of the
National Home Study Council

2. Any statement referring to the U.S. Department of Education's recognition of the Accrediting Commission must read:

The Accrediting Commission
of the National Home Study Council
is listed by the
U.S. Department of Education as a
nationally recognized accrediting agency.

The above statement may not be used in common media advertising.

3. Any statement referring to the COPA recognition of the Accrediting Commission must read:

The Accrediting Commission
of the National Home Study Council
is a recognized member of the
Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

Section II: Student Enrollment

A. Enrollment Agreements (Contracts)

1. The school must use an enrollment agreement

4

Chapter Two

Ad Features that Sell

by
Nancie E. Robertson
Head Copywriter
International Correspondence Schools

The Author

Nancie has been writing advertising copy for ICS in Scranton, Pennsylvania since 1986. In addition to writing for all types of print media, she is responsible for the promotional literature copy for the school's more than 55 different courses. She has studied at the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Scranton and is a member of the Northeast Pennsylvania Ad Club, the American Federation of Advertising, and the Direct Marketing Association.

Prior to joining ICS, Nancie lived and worked in New England, where she handled writing assignments for several major banks and financial institutions. She has also guest-lectured on the topics of writing advertising copy and copywriting as a career at local colleges and high schools.

Introduction

In print ads, more so than in any other media or form of direct marketing, each part (or feature) of the ad must be effectively used to sell, sell, sell. You don't have the luxury of a letter and a flyer to tell your story and convince your prospect . . . sometimes you have as little as 35 lines (2-1/2 inches of ad space) to do the job! That's why it is vitally important that every part of your ad be focused on one thing: producing your desired response, whether that be a direct sale or a request for more information. There are

three "must-have" features of your ad—plus a fourth that can greatly enhance your response. These are:

- **A "Killer" Headline**—to grab and hold the prospect's attention.
- **Persuasive, Benefit-Oriented Body or Sales Copy**—to create interest and desire in the prospect for your product or service.
- **An Easy-to-Use Response Device**—so your prospect can become your customer.
- **Eye-catching Graphics** (optional)—to visually support and enhance your headline and body copy.

Just as a piece of direct mail advertising must compete with the other mail in a prospect's mailbox, so, too, must a direct mail print ad compete with the other ads on the page. That's why it is important that you remember the following:

To be effective, your ad must do three things—

- Get the reader's attention;
- Communicate your message to the reader; and
- Persuade the reader to take action.

In order to accomplish these three points, you will need to integrate selling points into all of the ad features mentioned above—the headline, body copy, response device and graphics—to make sure each one "pulls its own weight" in the ad, helping to get your message across to your prospect.

It sounds complicated, but it's not. You just need to think about what you wish to accomplish, and you need to have some idea of how you are going to do it. In other words, you need to have a plan.

Your Plan: How to Get Started Before You Start Writing

Before you can write an effective ad, it helps to have a plan focusing on who would buy your product or service and why. Once you are clear about the who and the why, you can begin to determine the how—the way in which you will attract, qualify and sell your prospects.

The easiest way to establish your plan is to make a list of the benefits of your product or service, starting with the most important one and going from there. Benefits can easily be derived from looking at your product's features.

Features tell about a product, what it is, how it works, and other facts. **Benefits** are the reasons why the prospect should buy your particular product—statements that tell "what's in it for them." Knowing your product's benefits will help you determine who your ad will be targeting, just as knowing who your target customers are will help you in determining your major benefits.

What Makes Your Product Unique?

There is much talk in advertising circles of the USP—or Unique Selling Proposition. Basically, the USP is what makes your product different (and better) than the competition. It is your major benefit—one that is unique to your product and important to the prospect.

Now, obviously, the ideal situation is to write an ad for a product that is clearly different and absolutely superior to any other product in your category. This doesn't happen often in the "real world." Instead, you will most likely be looking to set your product apart from several other competitors, all of whom have products similar to yours. Here are two ways, then, you can develop your own USP if one is not immediately evident:

- **Play up a minor product difference.** Study your list of features and benefits—then look at your competitors' ads. Is there something on your list that they don't promote? If there is, you may have found your USP.

- **Really dramatize a benefit.** Just because your product is similar to others doesn't mean you can't take a common benefit and really play it up big in your ad. The mere fact that you are prominently featuring a particular benefit in your ad will lead readers to believe that maybe your product really is different, unique, better. And that's what you want.

Whatever you do, once you have your USP you are ready to start writing. Keep in mind the four main points of writing any type of direct-response advertising:

A — getting Attention

I — creating Interest

D — building Desire

A — urging to Action

Getting Attention: The Function of the Headline

It is the job of the headline to grab the prospect's attention . . . to make him or her want to read the body copy. In fact, the headline of a print ad roughly equates to the envelope copy in a direct mail package. It is your "split-second" opportunity to entice a prospect to find out more about your product or service. That's why it is so important that the headline be strong and clear—and why it's usually a good idea if it states your major benefit or chief selling point.

Studies have shown that, on average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy in any ad. And researchers have found that five seconds is about all the time you have to pique your prospect's interest or curiosity.

Therefore, your headline must generate **immediate** interest. But it should also do more than that. An effective headline should:

- Get attention by stating an important benefit or selling point.
- Select your audience by mentioning enough about your product to target those people interested in what you have to sell.
- Deliver a complete message and do some selling for you.
- Draw the reader into your body copy to find out more about your product and why it will benefit him or her.

Headlines and Graphics Work Together

Graphics in an ad should be thought of as more than just "window-dressing." While it is possible to write an effective space ad using just copy, the use of the right graphics will help grab the reader's attention and strengthen your selling message. Good graphics can attract and qualify readers, illustrate one or more of your major benefits and even take the place of some copy.

Effective graphics can also provide a measure of credibility. They can work with your headline to create a more powerful sales concept than either words or pictures could accomplish alone.

The most effective graphics will complement the headline, catch the reader's eye and help create interest in and desire for your product. The least effective graphics will merely stop prospects for a second before their eyes move on to the next ad.

The Body Copy: Telling, Selling and More

Now that you have your prospect interested, you have to convince him or her to do one of two things:

- Buy your product directly from the ad, or
- Send for more information about your product.

Either way, the same basic copy rules apply:

- First, **think about who your prospect is** and why he or she would be interested in your product. Then, write directly to that person.

- **Be personal**. Use the word "you." If you keep the focus on "you," your ad will just naturally stress benefits over features . . . and will be prospect-oriented, rather than advertiser-oriented, which is what you want.

- **Avoid long, complicated sentences and big, impressive sounding words**—unless that type of copy is necessary to sell your product. Again, studies have shown that short sentences provide greater clarity and result in a higher level of understanding.

- **Don't be wordy**. Keep your copy in the "active" rather than the "passive" voice. "You will," is much more effective than "You will be able to," because it doesn't slow the reader down with extra words, yet it conveys the same meaning.

- **Be concise**. Telling just as much as necessary to get your selling points across effectively. Always keep in mind to whom you are writing (the prospects) and make sure your copy is clear and understandable to them.

- **Use words appropriate to your readers.** In other words, for the most part, use the simplest word that conveys your meaning precisely. Don't say "facilitate" if "help" will do.

Which brings us to the subject of "Magic Words." There are some words that have proved to be more powerful than others. As we've already discussed, "you" is one of the most powerful words in advertising. Other powerful words include "free," "how to," "why," "sale," "quick," "easy," "bargain," "last chance," "results," "proven" and "save." Remember, use—but don't overuse—hard-hitting words that will get and hold the reader's attention.

By the same token, don't use vague words. Be specific. And avoid using words like "fabulous," "fantastic," or "wonderful" too often or they will lose their impact. Always strive to be as precise and as concise as possible in your ad copy—so that the prospect will understand what it is you are selling, why it is in their best interest to buy it, and how they can go about getting some for themselves. In smaller space ads, especially, it is important that you **make every word count.**

The Urge to Action: Making Your Propsect Your Customer

Once you've "told and sold," you need to make it as easy as possible for the reader to act. Provide clear, concise instructions that tell what needs to be done—and, if room permits, state the offer both in the ad copy and on the response device (coupon, return card, etc.).

The Features of Successful Print Ads

Here is a checklist of "features that sell" that you can use as a guideline when preparing a print ad.

- **The headline should contain a benefit, news, or promises of a reward for reading the copy.** Remember, you have only five seconds to get your prospect's attention—and you're competing with every other ad on the page!

- **The graphics should support the headline and show the benefit stated in the headline.** Remember the USP—your unique selling proposition? This is what you will be featuring in your headline and showing in your graphics for maximum impact.

- **Your lead paragraph should expand on the theme of the headline to draw your reader into the body copy.** From the headline on, every word, every sentence should be moving the reader through the copy to the point where you ask them to order.

- **The layout should draw the reader into the ad.** It should look inviting and "reader friendly." Here are some basic ways you can enhance the readability of your ads (see Appendix A & B):

  - Use one dominant photo or graphic.
  - Use a large, bold typeface for the headline.
  - Use clear, easy-to-read type for the body copy.
  - Use subheads throughout the body copy to break up large blocks of type.
  - Use short sentences and short paragraphs to make copy more "readable."
  - Keep the layout simple to avoid clutter. If your ad looks too hard to read, it can be a "turn off" to people.

  By the same token, here are some common visual mistakes you will want to avoid:

  - Headlines and copy blocks set at an angle
  - Tiny (smaller than eight-point) type
  - Long, unbroken blocks of copy
  - Clutter consisting of bursts, circles, arrows, etc.
  - Poorly executed graphics or badly reproduced photography.

  While the look of your ad won't compensate for poorly written copy, an unappealing layout can discourage interested customers from reading what you have to say.

- **The body copy should cover all important features and benefits, and should follow a logical order.** Remember, you're telling a story about your product. So just like a story, your copy should be organized with a beginning, a middle and an end. Don't confuse the prospect by jumping around—use your

copy to build interest so the prospect will just naturally want to buy!

- **Make sure that your copy is believable.** People are more skeptical than we'd like to believe—they've been told for years that, "If something seems too good to be true, it probably is," and they believe that. You want your copy to be trusted. You want your prospect to be satisfied. So don't sell something you can't deliver.

  This is more than just a matter of ethics—it is a real dollars-and-cents matter of economics. Clever advertising—with big claims and even bigger promises—may convince people to try your product, but it won't convince them to buy it again, or to even keep the one they've just ordered if it is not what the ad claimed. In today's market, refunds to students are unprofitable and unsatisfied students are just plain poor business. Sell the course that you have, based on its features and benefits. If you do your homework, think about who your prospects are, and follow the guidelines, you will find a market for your course.

- **Give the reader just enough information to convince the greatest number of qualified prospects to order.** The key words here are greatest number. Tell what needs to be told to convince the majority of readers. That way, you won't tell too much, or too little. How do you know how much is enough? When you've listed your major benefits, starting with your USP, identified the prospect's needs, and shown how your product can fill that need, you're done!

- **Make sure the copy is interesting to read.** People will read long copy that is interesting . . . that tells them something they want to know. But they won't read even the shortest copy if it has no relevance to them, if it's hard to understand, or if it's boring in content or style. Here are a few ways to add interest to your ads:

  - Use copy that "talks" to the reader personally, about his or her life or lifestyle, needs, wants or desires.
  - Use your copy to tell a story.
  - Write about real people.

- Use warm, personal, sincere-sounding copy.
- Use testimonials—from satisfied students, industry experts, even celebrities.
- Offer something in addition to what you're selling—a bonus, gift, pamphlet, etc. People love to get something extra!
- Write copy that is centered around timely issues—health, parenting, home, security, career, education, topics that you see in the evening news.

Remember, you have to hold your reader's interest along with creating a desire for your product if your ad is to be successful!

So here are some things that make for boring ads, though many of these points can be seen in ads running every day:

- Copy that centers around you—the school—and talks more about your success rather than focusing on what you as a company can do for the prospect.
- Copy that focuses on the features of the product—what it does, how it was made or how it works—rather than on the benefits (what it can do for the prospect).
- Copy that doesn't tell the prospect anything new, or that fails to set your product off from the competition.
- Copy that rambles, that lacks a point of view, a strong selling proposition or a clear-cut call to action. If you don't lead your prospect where you want him or her to go, don't be surprised if you don't get the sale.

- **Make sure your ad asks for action on the part of the prospect.** Whether you want to make the sale here and now, or you want the prospect to send for more information, you must tell them what you want them to do. Write, phone, fax—whatever it is, spell out step-by-step what has to be done. You will boost your response rate if you include a toll-free phone number for people to call. Other response devices can include a regular phone number, coupon, Business Reply Card or regular postcard that requires a stamp. In general, the more work you make the prospect do (e.g., clip a coupon, address an envelope, find a stamp) the more qualified the prospect will be . . .

or the more likely he or she is to actually purchase what it is you have to sell.

Conclusion

Just as in life, some rules are made to be followed . . . and some are made to be broken. For the most part, in writing ads that sell, almost every one of the "rules" listed under "features that sell" has been successfully broken by a direct response advertiser at one time or another. However, in order to know when to break the rules, you first have to learn how to use them. When in doubt, go by the book. Two excellent sources are *The Copywriter's Handbook* by Robert W. Bly (Dodd, Mead and Company), and *Winning Direct Response Advertising* by Joan Throckmorton (Prentice-Hall, Inc.). And always, always remember exactly why you're writing your ad: to turn prospects into students. Have fun!

Appendix A - Example of copy and graphics that work well together

One central graphic balances smaller side photos.

Images draw readers through ad and directs them to response device.

CHOOSE FROM 48
MONEY-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES
Start Your Own Successful Business! Prepare for an Exciting Career! Train at Home in Your Spare Time!
Choose from small business training, Career Diploma or Degree programs
Start your own business or train for a better job. With ICS you learn at home—no time wasted traveling to class or waiting in lines. Study when and where you choose... go at your own pace. You're in a "class of one," so you don't wait for the next semester to start—you can start anytime!
The decision to invest your time, energy and money preparing to open a business or start a new career is not a simple one. Yet it can be the most important decision you ever make. It can offer you the opportunity to be your own boss, enjoy your independence and make money in a business of your own. Or it can open the door to career opportunities in a job you'll enjoy.
Whether your goal is a full-time business of your own, a spare-time money-making career, or something in between, ICS training can be your first step to more money, more security and a better way of life. We've spent more than a hundred years training people for exciting and profitable futures in a wide variety of fields.
The ICS training method is so successful that over 10,000,000 students have enrolled and more than 2,000 American corporations have used ICS training for their own employees—including IBM, Avon, Ford, Mack Truck and International Paper, to name just a few.
Learn from Specialists! Home Study makes it easy to get the training you really want!
Our staff guides you throughout your program. And everything you need for your complete training is included with your course at no extra cost. So whether you want to start a business, train for your first job, or prepare for a management career, send today for free facts!
Mail Post-Paid Card Today for Free Career Kit!
FREE CAREER KIT!
If card is missing, write directly to
International Correspondence Schools
925 Oak Street Scranton, Pa 18515 Dept 0000000
This is the international headquarters of ICS, located in beautiful Northeastern Pennsylvania

Short copy block.

Urge to action.

Urge to action.

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Appendix B - Another example

One central visual.

Image in bold type.

Lists are always good.

Copy expands on headline and leads reader into the copy.

Subheads break up copy into short blocks.

Urge to action.

How To

Make More Money

Once You've Taken an ICS Course...

10 WAYS TO MAKE MORE MONEY...

1. GET A JOB
2. GET A BETTER JOB
3. IMPRESS YOUR BOSS
4. GET A RAISE
5. GET INTO THE UNION
6. GET A PROMOTION
7. GET INTO MANAGEMENT
8. GET INTO A NEW CAREER
9. START A PART-TIME BUSINESS
10. START A FULL-TIME BUSINESS

1 WAY TO GET STARTED FAST!

YOUR JOB IS YOUR KEY TO A BETTER LIFE. With ICS you can choose from 54 career opportunities—in some of today's hottest career fields. Computers! Business! Electronics! Legal Assistant! Or get the knowledge you need to start your own business. Catering! Interior Decorating! Gun Repair! Auto Mechanics! Most courses can be completed in less than a year. Degree programs can be completed in just 2 years. No night classes. No weekend seminars. No time missed from work or play.

AN IDEAL WAY TO LEARN

Our graduates tell us they like home study because it's so convenient and easy to do. Choose your own study hours...go as fast or slow as you want. You waste no time traveling to and from class. You never have to miss a paycheck. Yet skilled instructors are ready to help you whenever you ask.

No one can promise success, but if you want more security, more day-to-day satisfaction and a better future, send for free facts and the color brochure of your choice. There's no obligation and no salesman will visit.

GET YOUR DEGREE WITHOUT ATTENDING COLLEGE...OR A CAREER DIPLOMA TO HELP YOU MAKE MORE MONEY

The facts show that specialized career training has helped thousands of people make more money, get better jobs, even start whole new careers. ICS training is the right training for you—whether you want to get your first job—or you want to get your last job! The choice of more than 10 000 000 men and women and more than 2 000 major corporations is the right choice for you!

CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-992-8765
Ext. 000

OR MAIL COUPON TODAY FOR FREE FACTS!

- No previous experience needed—even for technical or computer courses
- Train at home, the hours you choose
- Go at your own pace—no one rushes you
- Talk one-on-one with your instructors just by picking up the phone
- Exams are all open book—no midnight cramming, no hassles
- Whatever you need for your course—from a Pentax® camera to Sears Craftsman tools to an IBM-compatible personal computer—is included and sent right to your home!

International Correspondence Schools, Dept. 0000000
925 Oak Street, Scranton, PA 18515

YES! Please send me free facts and full information on how I can train at home in my spare time for the career I have chosen. No obligation. No salesman will visit me.

CHECK ONE BOX ONLY!

ASSOCIATE IN SPECIALIZED BUSINESS DEGREE PROGRAMS
- Business Management
- Accounting
- Business Management with option in Finance
- Business Management with option in Marketing
- Applied Computer Science
- Hospitality Management

ASSOCIATE IN SPECIALIZED TECHNOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAMS
- Mechanical Engineering Technology
- Civil Engineering Technology
- Electrical Engineering Technology
- Industrial Engineering Technology
- Electronics Technology

CAREER DIPLOMA PROGRAMS

Computer Programming	Bookkeeping	Art	TV/VCR Repair
Computer Programming: COBOL	Home/Restaurant Management	Small Business Mgmt.	Child Day Care
Personal Computer Specialist	Drafting	Interior Decorating	Legal Assistant
Computer-Assisted Bookkeeping	Travel Agent	Wildlife/Forestry Conservation	Photography
PC Repair	Animal Care Specialist	Legal Secretary	Journalism/Short Story Writing
Desktop Publishing & Design	Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	Diesel Mechanics	Drama/Playwriting & Design
High School	Electronics	Fitness & Nutrition	Florist
Catering/Gourmet Cooking	Secretary	Fashion	Teacher Aide
Medical/Dental Office Assistant	Electrician	Merchandising	Home Inspector
Auto Mechanics	Police Sciences	Gun Repair	Medical Transcriptionist
	Private Security Officer	Motorcycle Repair	Real Estate Appraiser
		Surveying & Mapping	

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ Apt # _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____

Urge to action.

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Chapter Three

How to Write Direct Marketing Headlines

by
Axel Andersson
Founder
Axel Andersson Akademie

The Author

Axel Andersson comes from Hamburg, Germany, and has been in the home study field in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland for more than 30 years. The Axel Andersson Akademie is the leading home study school in the German-speaking part of Europe for teaching languages, writing (fiction, nonfiction, and advertising) and fine arts. In his honor, the prestigious Axel Andersson Award has been created for excellence in direct mail. The award is presented every year to copywriters and designers of mailings that have remained a control[1] for at least three years.

Axel has given sessions on advertising at NHSC conferences and workshops. His most recent article, published in the Fall 1992 issue of the NHSC News, *is entitled, "Making Your Advertising More Effective." He currently resides in Palm Harbor, Florida.*

Introduction

If you were to single out one component of an ad as the **one most important**, the headline would win hands down.

Indeed, many veteran advertising practitioners believe that the

[1] A control is an advertisement or a direct mail package that in a split-run has beaten other competing ads/direct mail packages. A control is not only the benchmark against which all other ads/direct mail packages are measured, it is the main ad or direct mail package used at the time.

headline constitutes at least three-fourths of the benefit the advertisers realize from running their ad.

When David Ogilvy equated the headline with 80 cents of an advertising dollar, he was speaking from years of experience in advertising research. Survey after survey taken by Gallup and Robinson Readership Research indicated to Ogilvy that four out of five people **do not read** beyond the headline of an ad. Much the same conclusion is apparent from an examination of the Daniel Starck Readership Service Studies:

> *"To readers, advertising headlines serve much the same purpose as do newspaper headlines: they give them a means of evaluating the different items quickly and enable them to select for reading those of particular interest."*

Whether or not people will read your advertisement depends to a greater extent on its headlines and subheads than on any other factor, with the possible exception of the illustration.

What is a Headline Supposed to Do?

A headline is supposed to:

1. attract the attention of select prospects from the mass audience, engage them; and

2. lure them into the body copy.

The three ways you can attract the reader's attention to your ad are by using: (1) the headline alone; (2) the illustration alone; or (3) a combination of headline, illustration and layout.

Combine Words and Illustrations

The most effective headlines combine the maximum headline with a dramatic visual interpretation of the same message. To rely on words alone is to use only half the tools at your disposal.

The headline writer is urged to think visually for a very sound reason—pictures communicate faster! People of varied educational levels respond spontaneously to a strong picture. Even the

most stirring words may demand some slight mental processing before they are fully understood.

A couple of generations ago, many ads were composed chiefly of words in an ornate frame or border. Today's ad is far more likely to feature a spectacular illustration supplemented with a text, long or short. The balance between the two has totally changed over the years. One-third or more of the total space is often allotted for headline and main illustration.

Integrating headline and visual is difficult since it takes hard creative work to develop exactly the right combination to make a meaningful point very simple. The copywriter has to know which benefit or feature being sold lends itself most dramatically to verbal and/or pictorial interpretation.

A headline is often a caption for the illustration. Ideally, one sharpens the meaning of the other, adds to its interest, or makes it more dramatic. In most cases then, the headline and the illustration(s) are married.

If you have a powerful illustration arresting to your prospects, the headline may serve as an enforcement, as an explanation for the illustration, or as an enlargement upon the idea in the illustration. Or the headline may act as step two in a sequence of ideas—the illustration being step one and the copy step three.

In direct marketing, the headline often carries as much or more responsibility than the illustration for getting initial readership of the advertisement. The illustration may stop people and attract attention; however, words—provocative, dynamic, exciting, powerful words—are far more likely to get your reader into the body copy. (Milt Pierce)

There may be times when a headline does not need an illustration. But there can **never** be a time when an illustration does not need a headline. Where there is no illustration your headline carries the whole load.

Study "Winning" Headlines

Even experts may need to write a dozen or more variations of their headline idea before selecting one that will appear in print. Many successful headlines are based on already successful head-

lines. In other words, some writers simply learn what headlines have worked for others, and then use a similar headline for their ad. Some writers also use "winning" headlines to stimulate their own creative thinking.

The next time you're developing a headline, try using the *Fourteen Guidelines* below—as well as headlines from successful home study school ads and direct marketing headlines outside the home study field—to stimulate your own thinking.

Guideline No. 1

The headline must select an interested audience and promise the prospect a worthwhile reward for reading further. (Vic Schwab)

Examples:

> *"What Are Your Best Chances to Make Money in Real Estate? The Answer Below May Surprise You."*
>
> *"Do You Make These Mistakes in English?"*
>
> *"We're Looking for People to Write Children's Books."*
>
> *"To People Who Want to Write—But Can't Get Started."*
>
> *"Announcing the New Edition of the Encyclopedia That Makes It Fun to Learn Things."*
>
> *"Do You Need a Better Education to Reach Your Vocational Goal?"* (This headline was a control for ten years in Germany.)

Many headlines contain the word "you" or "your." Any good headline should talk to one reader, not to a lot of readers nor to a mass audience, but directly to the individual who is looking at the advertisement.

Often the author of the successful ad seems to be speaking directly to the reader in personal conversation, a "You and Me Style."

This style is intimate, colloquial, warm and free. Good headlines have a conversational tone, and they are appropriate to everyday dialogue. The use of the word "you" will help make the headline personal.

Guideline No. 2

The "What's In It For Me—Now?" Benefit Headline: The average reader approaches an ad with a question, "What's in it for me—now?" And your task is to convince him or her instantly: "This is for me! Tell me more!"

The headline doesn't necessarily sell the reader; that usually comes later. It says in effect: "Here's something interesting," "Here's news," "Here's a useful item," "Here's something profitable for me," or "Here's an easy way to do something." The headline involves readers through appeal to self-interest.

Your headline should strike quickly at the self-interest of the reader. People are busy. Their time for reading is limited; limited to an average of four ads per magazine or newspaper (Ogilvy). Their interests are egocentric in the broadest sense of the word.

Readers refuse to get excited about things which are unimportant to them. Readers are interested in an advantage, a reward when they are exposed to an ad; a way to look better, feel better, know more, get ahead, save more, and spend less. In most cases they decide within a few seconds—on the basis of a quick glance at the headline—whether they are likely to receive one of those advantages.

For the headline with or without an illustration, self-interest, the right benefit(s), the right reward(s), and promises, the right appeal are the most important qualities.

John Caples stated that, "A good ad is a believable promise to the right audience."

Examples:

"You Can Laugh at Money Worries—If You Follow this Simple Plan"

"Selling My Paintings is Like Getting Paid to Eat Ice Cream"

"One Powerful Headline Can Make You a Fortune"

"No Time for Yale—Took College at Home" says Well-Known Author

"Lawyers Reveal Legal Loopholes That Make Money"

"An Amazing Business You Can Carry in Your Pocket"

Guideline No. 3

"Tune in on the most latent day dream of the reader." (Tom Collins)

Examples:

"This Private Office (with salary to match) is Waiting for You!" (LaSalle Extension University ad)

"Step Into One of the Best Paid Jobs in Business Today . . . Be An Accountant" (LaSalle)

"Picture Yourself Going Places!" (Many years ago this successful headline for ICS was illustrated with a comic strip showing aspects of the good life, such as a house, a car, etc. This type of ad shows pictures of the rewards which your courses offer people.)

"Picture Yourself Playing a Guitar!"

Guideline No. 4

Give your question headline a genuine "bite," a deep down, thought-provoking quality.

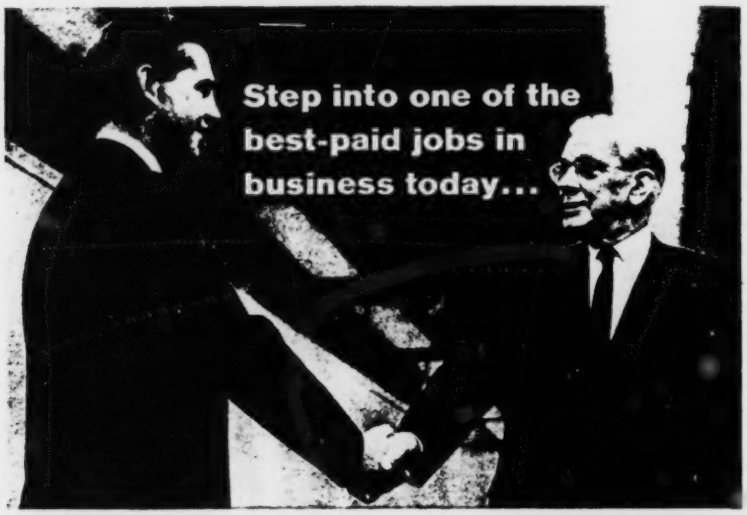
"Are You One of the Quiet Ones Who Should Be a Writer?" (A Famous Writers School control ad for many years.)

"Have You Ever Wished You Could Draw That Well? How Do You Know You Can't?" (Famous Artists School)

"I Get Paid to Draw—Why Not You?" (A testimonial headline by a celebrity.)

"Which of These Men Will Be You Ten Years From Now?"

Perhaps the suitability of the question headline hinges upon the ability of the question to draw the reader into the body copy for



Be an ACCOUNTANT

Train in your spare time with LaSalle

LaSalle graduates report up to 56% increased pay the first year

THE demand for trained Accountants exceeds the supply. Salaries keep going higher, promotions are rapid. Many Accounting-trained men are being moved up to important management positions. Why remain in a dull job with insufficient pay when you can reap such big rewards in money and prestige?

You can take LaSalle Accounting training at home, in your spare hours, without any previous bookkeeping experience. LaSalle's distinguished faculty starts you at the beginning, explains every basic Accounting principle and method, gives you actual Accounting problems with your lessons, then corrects and grades your work, shows you exactly how accountants on the job handle these problems. Your training is complete, practical, and enjoyable. You are thoroughly prepared for every Accounting task you will be expected to handle in the business world.

Your career could not be in more experienced hands. During more than half a century, LaSalle has trained over 1,000,000 students. More than 5,500 CPA's have received LaSalle training. A LaSalle diploma in Accounting is respected by employers.

Mail Attached Post Card for Free Booklet and Sample Lesson

If you are truly seeking a more rewarding job, with higher pay, a solid position in the business world, and all the good things that come with success, you owe it to yourself to read LaSalle's famous booklet "Opportunities in Accounting". With it you will receive a free sample lesson in Accounting which will demonstrate how LaSalle makes home study easy, interesting and practical. Mail attached card today.

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
A Correspondence Institution • Chicago, Illinois 60605

"Show the Promise, Not the Product." This headline makes your prospect the center of your ad, not the product or service you are selling. (LaSalle Extension University ad)

the answer. If the reader can answer the question without further reference to the ad, you have probably asked the wrong question. Ask a question that can't be answered "No," e.g., "How many of these helpful books have you on hand to use every day?"

The question headline is more personalized than most other forms. Often the question is placed within quotes or is accompanied by a picture of the person asking the question. The personal appeal is valuable.

Make sure that the question headline is the best device for deliver-

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ing your copy message. Try to make your question headline provocative. It will be if it carries some interesting information or a stimulating idea. It will be if it is a form of personal quiz, implying a not-quite-known benefit for the reader, if he or she reads your ad.

"Could Writing Be the Second Chance You're Looking For?"

"Are You Missing the Joy of Playing Guitar?"

"What Success Can You Anticipate as a . . . Trained Tax Consultant?"

"What Would You Do If You Lost Your Job Tomorrow?"

Some provocative question headlines state the present condition of the reader and add the idea, *"Don't You Wish . . . ?"*

To help you decide whether or not you should use a question in the headline, read your question headline and ask yourself what your response would be if you were a prospective reader. Very possibly, in a number of instances, your immediate response will be negative. Who knows? I couldn't care less! But if the question intrigues you, if it stimulates a desire to learn more, if it is tantalizing and provocative, at least the odds are in your favor of creating a great headline.

The question headline is probably the easiest of all headlines to write.

Guideline No. 5

Your headline has to be a provocation to read the subhead (if used) and the first paragraph. Your headline should force a reading of the first paragraph—***by those who are your prospects.*** (Caples)

Those last six words are all important. That is why so many successful home study school ads are selective to some degree. Attracting attention is by far not enough. The headline must attract the **right kind of people**—your logical prospects—and it must attract them in the right way.

Your headline should logically lead into what you have to say.

The suitability of the headline rests upon its ability to get the prospect into the main copy in a positive frame of mind. "Do not inflate your readership by attracting curiosity seekers at the expense of losing customers." (Caples)

If your headline is going to force a reading of the first paragraph, it must not tell too much of your story, and thereby make further reading unnecessary. When the advertiser's name appears in the headline, it may satisfy the curiosity of the readers enough, so that they will not read further. Exception: the name of a prominent company in the headline is more likely to be an asset than a hindrance to copy reading.

Guideline No. 6

Try exhortative command headlines—the most commonly used and effective headlines in direct marketing.

One of the most successful Charles Atlas ads was headed, *"Give Me Your Measurements and I Will Make You a New Man."*

Examples:

"Take This 1-Minute Test and Discover How . . . "

"Don't Envy the Plumber—Be One"

"Be Your Own Boss . . . Be a Locksmith"

"Picture Yourself Leading Life as a Writer"

"¡Speak Spanish Like a Diplomat!"

Note that the first word in the command headline is a strong, very demanding action, on the part of the reader. A good headline implies urgency. It makes an immediate impact on your prospect. If the headline doesn't work quickly, it won't work at all. If the headline commands readers to do something that they recognize as being in their self-interest, you are on solid ground.

Guideline No. 7

The shorter you keep the headline the more display it can receive in the space. If a longer headline is needed, give it some study in an effort to shorten it. Where the nature of the idea to be expressed makes it impossible to confine headline length to no more than approximately ten words, the most satisfactory solution is to break it into a shorter main headline, followed by an explanatory subhead. Subheads are an extension and reinforcement of your headline idea. The subhead should also be as terse as possible, but it does provide for a fuller explanation of the main headline.

"Want a Perfect Vacation?"

"Let A . . . Serve Your 4 Needs."

Subheads were: *Where to go, how to go, what to wear,* and *what to take.*

The addition of the "4" added an element which piqued the reader's curiosity. What are my four vacation needs? Why four? The reader must read to find out.

"My Short Story is Published!"

"What Can You Do To Make Sure This Magic Moment Comes True for You?"

Subheadlines can summarize the body text or the entire ad. As in the examples, the subcaption can spell out the promise and enlarge on the benefit of the product. It should compel further reading.

Use subheads in the copy: The words that are used in subheads should be given careful thought. Particularly you should use "appeal" or "benefit" words. These subheads carry display weight and impart emphasis. Make sure subheads stand out for easy scanning. Their very presence visually adds liveliness to the page.

Whether you plan it that way or not, many people will read the subheads apart from the rest. When read in that way, the subhead should make complete sense. Make some of your subheads interrogative in form to excite curiosity and interest in the body copy which follows. Ask a question to which people will want to read

the answer. Avoid declarative subheads that answer themselves—they don't lead anywhere. Start some with interesting questions beginning with *why, when, how, which, how much,* etc.

Try, for variety, subheads that are put in question form, such as:

"But will it take long?"

"What is the pay?"

"What are the chances of advancement?"

Always place a caption directly under the picture. This is where the reader will first look for it. Captions should consist of complete sentences. A good caption can ordinarily hold a reader's attention for at least two lines, so it is wasteful to write fewer. Three lines seem to be ideal in terms of reader comfort.

Give the largest illustration on a page the most complete caption. The reader tends to look at the biggest picture first, so its caption is the appropriate place for reinforcing the headline, inviting your prospect to read the ad.

If you cannot caption a picture, that picture is probably pointless. (Milt Pierce)

Guideline No. 8

The "how" and "how to" headlines have enormous broad applications, so much so that "how to" headlines almost never seem overdone.

There are more than 7,000 books in print with the words "how to" in their titles. When you run a headline of the "how to" type you are promising readers that then and there you are going to tell them how to solve a problem—hopefully one that is bothering them—with your product or service. Assuming your solution, based on your product, is applicable and pertinent, this is the type of headline that comes as close as any to assuring excellent readership.

"How to" headlines and the accompanying copy also often tell "why." The "how to" headline tends to establish the advertiser as

an expert or authority. This type of headline seems to address each reader personally.

When a headline begins with words "how to," it not only talks to the reader, it makes a problem his or her problem and promises a solution. Moreover, nobody ever said you have to confine yourself to saying "how to" in a "how to" headline. You can interchange "how to" with other provocative phrases: "The truth of...," "Advice to . . .," "The Secret of . . .," for instance, "The Secret of Teaching Yourself Music."

The "how to" headline is a versatile technique so, if you have any kind of educational message to deliver, consider it well. Examples from the educational field are:

"How to Become a 'Non-Degree' Engineer in the Booming World of Electronics"

"How to Discover What You Are Really Good At"

"How to Make Money Writing Short Paragraphs"

"How to Program Yourself for Success"

"How to Read Faster and Get More Out of It!"

"How to Discover the Fortune That Lies Hidden in Your Head"

Examples from other fields are:

"How to Pay Zero Taxes"

"How to Get the Guts of 300 Business Magazines in 30 Minutes"

"How to Win Friends and Influence People"

Guideline No. 9

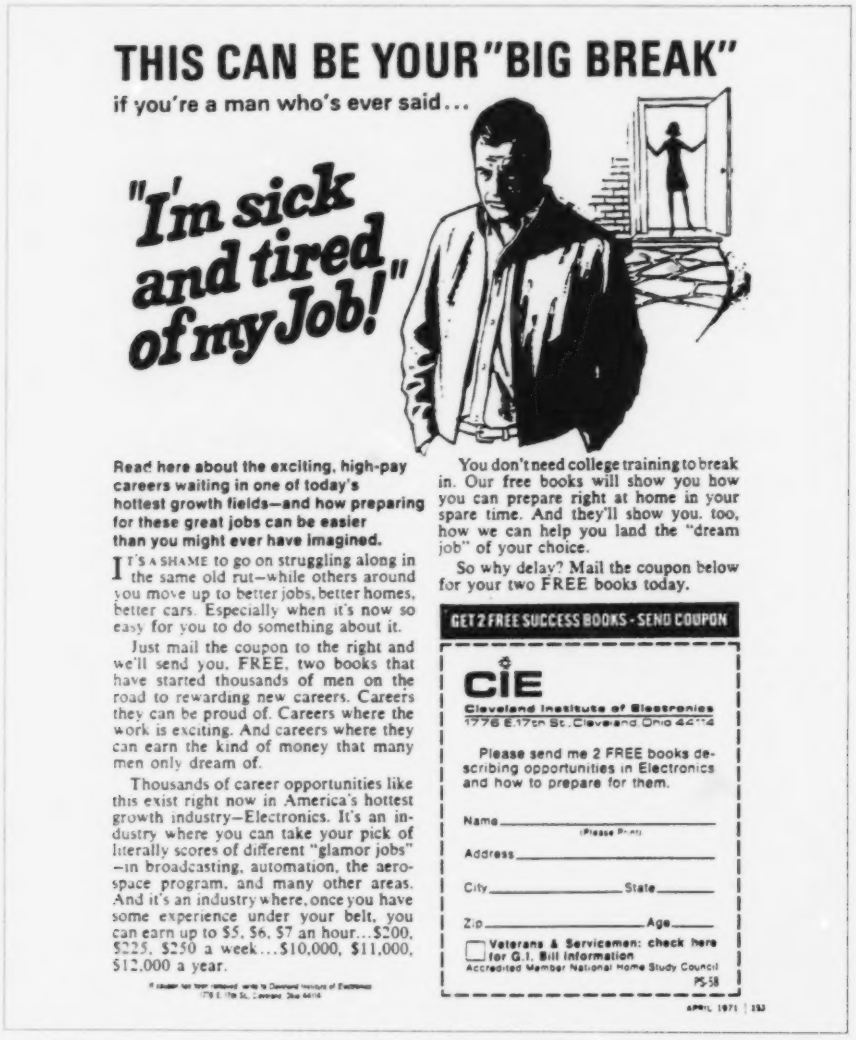
As a rule, people are far more willing to buy a product when there is a positive reward; not an escape from dire consequences. Positive "reward" pictures tend to work better than negative "problem" pictures except where the product is medical.[2] Sell a

[2] Drayton Bird, *Common Sense Direct Marketing*, 1982, p. 32

"cure" positively, a "preventive" can be offered negatively in a headline.

Another reason why positive headlines are more successful than negative headlines is that the headline should be rewarding in itself—a pleasure to read.

A classic example is the ad with the headline "Cold Feet" against the ad with the headline "Warm Feet." Very few were interested in "Cold Feet;" many however, wanted "Warm Feet." (Kenneth Goode, *Modern Advertising*, 1937, pp. 188-189)



THIS CAN BE YOUR "BIG BREAK"

if you're a man who's ever said...

"I'm sick and tired of my Job!"

Read here about the exciting, high-pay careers waiting in one of today's hottest growth fields—and how preparing for these great jobs can be easier than you might ever have imagined.

IT'S A SHAME to go on struggling along in the same old rut—while others around you move up to better jobs, better homes, better cars. Especially when it's now so easy for you to do something about it.

Just mail the coupon to the right and we'll send you, FREE, two books that have started thousands of men on the road to rewarding new careers. Careers they can be proud of. Careers where the work is exciting. And careers where they can earn the kind of money that many men only dream of.

Thousands of career opportunities like this exist right now in America's hottest growth industry—Electronics. It's an industry where you can take your pick of literally scores of different "glamor jobs"—in broadcasting, automation, the aerospace program, and many other areas. And it's an industry where, once you have some experience under your belt, you can earn up to $5, $6, $7 an hour...$200, $225, $250 a week...$10,000, $11,000, $12,000 a year.

You don't need college training to break in. Our free books will show you how you can prepare right at home in your spare time. And they'll show you, too, how we can help you land the "dream job" of your choice.

So why delay? Mail the coupon below for your two FREE books today.

GET 2 FREE SUCCESS BOOKS - SEND COUPON

CIE

Cleveland Institute of Electronics
1776 E.17th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Please send me 2 FREE books describing opportunities in Electronics and how to prepare for them.

Name _____ (Please Print)

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Age _____

☐ Veterans & Servicemen: check here for G.I. Bill information

Accredited Member National Home Study Council

PS-58

APRIL 1971 | 133

This Cleveland Institute of Electronics' ad quickly delivers the big promise that "this can be your big break . . ."

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Cleveland Institute of Electronics' ad, with the negative main headline "I am sick and tired of my job!", was often repeated in the 70s. However, please note how quickly it delivers the big promise: "This can be your 'big break' if you're a man who's ever said . . ."

A negative in a headline is apt to be overlooked, so that the line will be interpreted on fast reading to mean the opposite of what was intended. We have probably all found ourselves confused as a result of missing a negative in material we were treating more seriously than an advertising headline. The probability of overlooking a negative is even higher in headlines. For example, instead of "Contains No Sodium," write "100% Sodium Free."

Another disadvantage with a negative headline is that it takes 48% longer for the reader to understand a negative statement than a positive one. (T. George Harris)

Some headlines may be hard to classify either as positive or negative. Here are two examples:

"When People Ask You What You Do for a Living . . . Do You Change the Subject?"

"Are You Satisfied with Your Job? Yes or No?"

Guideline No. 10

Small ads and classified ads often put the offer into a headline.

Examples:

"Learn Piano by Watching TV"

"$850 Weekly with Just . . . A Screwdriver!"

"Free Booklet Tells Investors How to Make Money on Low Cost Stocks"

For some one-column ads the illustration or the typography of the headline makes or breaks the ad. Here are several classical examples of longtime controls:

Play Right Away!

Two small ads, both long-time controls, to show how important the illustration can be even for a small ad headline.

ACCOUNTANT
BECOME AN EXPERT

Executive Accountants and C. P. A's earn $4,000 to $10,000 a year. Thousands of firms need them. We train you thoroly at home in spare time for C. P. A's examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous experience unnecessary. Personal training under supervision of staff of C. P. A's. Placement counsel and help. Write for free book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays."

LASALLE Extension University, 417 So. Dearborn St.
A Correspondence Institution Dept. Chicago 5, Ill.

REAL ESTATE
BE A BROKER

BECOME AN EXPERT IN
TRAFFIC

Small ads are often built around a key word. Add a strong command to that key word and you may have an ad you can run for years as proven by these three ads.

LEARN TO MOUNT BIRDS
ANIMALS, FISH, PETS

FREE BOOK

Fine Tax Exempt Year-round Hunting Trips. Fill Taxidermy home museum Hunters, earn MOUNT Game Heads, Birds, Animals, Fish, Pets. Learn by Mail. Great Fun, spare time PROFITS. ALL about it in the new illustrated book. FREE. Write today. Get this WORLD'S FREE BOOK. NOW. SPECIAL OFFER. POSTAL CARD. STATE YOUR AGE.
N. W. SCHOOL OF TAXIDERMY, Dept. 2563, Omaha, Nebr.

LEARN WATCH REPAIRING

AT HOME. By our modern and original system of instruction you can learn every part of the WATCH REPAIRING TRADE AT HOME. Prepare yourself for a well-paying position or start in business after completing our course of instruction. Good watch repairers are in demand and generally earn very good salaries. Full particulars upon request.
WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF WATCH REPAIRING
756 N. Milwaukee, Dept. 30, Milwaukee 2, Wis.

Some small space ads never seem to tired. The "Learn to Mount Birds" ad has run for more than 50 years. The "Learn Watch Repairing" ran for almost as long.

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Here are some incentives and headline words for small mail order ads.

I can	*I can teach you how to repair your own car*
Learn	*Learn to Repair Watches. Learn Accounting*
Earn	*Earn More in 1994*
Become	*Become a TV Repair Expert. Become a Hotel Executive*
Fight	*Fights Headaches Three Ways*
Avoid	*Avoid These Mistakes*
Discover	*Discover the Easy . . . ! Discover These New Uses!*
Easy	*Easy Method to . . .*
Wanted	*Wanted—1000 Skeptics*
Surprise	*Surprise Your Friends. Surprise Yourself.*

For further incentive and headline words, see pages 298-305 of Robert A. Baker's *Help Yourself to Better Mail Order*, 1953. Also John Caples' *Making Ads Pay*, 1957, pages 129-139, 224-232; and John Caples' *Tested Advertising Methods*, 1974, pages 219-238.

Guideline No. 11

Copywriting Rules that Apply to Headlines

The direct marketing headline should stir an emotion. Try to dramatize the emotional benefit of your product or service in your headline.

Direct marketing headline copy should generate excitement, dramatize, contain words that make you feel, have motivating impact. Direct marketing headlines are frequently written in a more exciting style than for usual consumer advertising.

The headline should be direct, in second person and present tense. Use the present tense, (not the future tense) for strength and vigor. The present tense makes readers feel more certain that they can realize the promised benefits. In fact, it gives them the sense of immediate participation with no waiting. The present tense is also more emphatic.

Verbs are active, not passive. Check if your headline contains an

active, lively verb. Use short and picture-creating words. Make important words strong, vital, and colorful. Eliminate most adjectives and adverbs. They belong in copy blocks where you can support them. They are less believable in headlines.

Many copywriters are fond of alliteration, concealed rhyme, and other rhetorical devices to make their headline "catchy." For the average writer these tricks are not recommended, since they too often call attention to themselves.[3] Copywriters must take care to avoid calling attention to their ads per se, instead of to their products and real sales messages. Top copywriters like Linda Wells,[4] however, like to give the headline the kind of rhythm that makes it easy to remember and repeat. Judith Weiss[5] tries to give all her copy rhythm.

Avoid headlines which are merely curiosity headlines. You see a headline that arouses your curiosity—you read the copy, **if** you have time. You see a headline that offers you something you want—you **make** the time to read that copy.

Avoid stilted language, over-clever phraseology and vague generalities. The more specific the headline, the more likely it is to do the job and do it well.

Examples:

"Backache? Here's One Minute Relief!"

"A Message to Asthma Sufferers"

"Do You Suffer from Sleepless Nights?"

Be specific and to the point, not general and applicable to any product or any situation. Your headline should not try to cover too much ground—if it tries to talk to everybody it ends up by talking to nobody.

"Blind" headlines that require reading of the body copy to decipher them don't work well. Copywriters who believe they can tease readers into an advertisement are throwing money away.

---

[3] Hotchkiss, George Burton: *Advertising Copy,* 1949, p. 275
[4] Wells, Linda: *Direct Marketing Handbook,* 1984, p. 452.
[5] Weiss, Judith: *Denison Hatch Million Dollar Mailing$,* 1993, p. 113

Headlines that quote somebody, in quotation marks, score dramatically high—28% above the average for all headlines recalled, according to one study.

A new touch can be added to any headline by the use of the words "new," "now," "at last," etc. when justified. The news or informative headline approach is common in newspaper ads and appropriately so. Newspapers are read for news and advertising is the news of the shopping world. Caples reveals 29 headline formulas based upon specific words or combinations.[6]

Don't overlook the power of the words such as "Free" and "You." You can seldom use "Free," but you can almost always use "You"—if you try hard enough. But when you can use "Free," it is stronger than most words—in the headline, as caption to the illustration. "Consumers will pay almost any price to get something free," or as one pro told me, "The second word of any headline is unimportant as long as the first is free." His best example of this is "Free to Executives—$2 to Others."

Since originality and novelty are important factors in attracting attention and interest, any headline tends to lose some of its value when it is repeated too often.

What to write first, copy or headline? Is it best to write the headline before or after composing the copy message? It can be done both ways. One writer will study the information He/she has accumulated, select the benefits and news or descriptive factors and write the full message from top to bottom: headline first, lead paragraph next and continue to the signature.

Another writer will not attempt the headline until the full body message is down on paper. Often the headline that could work best can be pulled out of the body copy. He/she proceeds like a newspaper copy reader who studies the story for the most arresting fact to use in the headline. No rule states that either method is better. The copywriter should use the system he or she finds to be the most productive.

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[6] Caples, J.: *Tested Advertising Methods*, NY, 1974, pp.53-65

Guideline No. 12

"We treat the outer envelope as the headline of the ad," says Bill Jayne.

Very much the same rules we have given for headlines, incidentally also apply to the teaser copy and graphics on the outer envelope of a direct mail package.

Many copywriters consider the teaser the most important element of a direct mail piece. "It's the show window that makes you want to go into the store, the sleeve on the record album, the cover on the book." (*Ad Week*, October 20, 1986.)

The teaser, the copy and/or the illustration on the outer envelope may determine whether the recipient opens and reads the package or not.

Many successful teasers try to imply some reward for simply opening the envelope. For example:

> *"This is information that you asked us for . . . , but it contains a surprise"*
>
> *"Inside—a Look Into Your Future!*
> and below—a direction indicator followed by *"Which Way Next?"*
>
> *"Will you Do Us a Favor?"*
> (A favor that's found to benefit you, too)
>
> *"Here Are Two Things We Know About You—and One Thing We Don't—"*

Guideline No. 13

The typography of the headline should be pleasant to look at and easy to read. A headline is usually set in large type, but should never be set in all capital letters. It is hard to read and it does not look inviting. All words except those to be emphasized should ordinarily be set in lower case roman, not sans-serif.

Black against yellow background gives the highest readability.

Whenever you can, avoid small reverse text and particularly light colors over slightly darker colors (worse than white out of black,, or worst of all, reversing out over patterned backgrounds. Indeed, running any type over a patterned background is folly.

Avoid tricky headline treatment, change of style, size and color of type, wavy or zigzagging headlines, and printing on tint block.

Is your headline, illustration, layout bold enough to stand against whatever competition the publication can throw against it? One way for you to determine whether your advertisement is competing is to clip your rough layout to a typical newspaper and magazine page containing other advertisements, to determine whether the headline and illustration are submerged by other items on the page. You should continue experimenting with your headline and illustration size until you are certain that your advertisement will be competitive.

Many advertisers mistakenly open their ads with this sequence: headline at the top of the page, main illustration, and text with no display line above it. If they insist on placing the headline above the main illustration, there should be a secondary display line above the text to pull the eyes into it. The line or lines that appear above the illustration should provide a complete reading thought, and so should any lines that appear below it. When a headline is long, it should not be broken up so that part of it appears above the illustration and the rest of it below.

Guideline No. 14

The final selection of a headline should be the result of tests to find the best headline rather than professional judgment alone.

Professional judgment is too often wrong!

Case Study No. 1

The classic example of Guideline 14 is that for many years Sherwin Cody offered a home study course in English through ads with a headline, "The Man Who Simplified English." In the process of continually testing appeals, Maxwell Sackheim changed the headline to, "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?"* Responses increased immediately. Over the next 25 years, the Cody School was never able to beat Sackheim's headline.

Why did the second headline out-pull its predecessor? Consider the following:

- "The Man Who Simplified English" is a statement. "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?" is a question which stops readers and involves and pulls them into the ad because it offers them a reward.

- "The Man Who Simplified English" may have implied a benefit, but "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?" talks directly to the reader's problem. There is no question what the subject matter is.

- "The Man Who Simplified English" is general in meaning, and it can be interpreted in many ways. "Do You Make These Mistakes in English?" is very specific.

One single word in a headline can make or break it

Suppose the control Sherwin Cody headline said simply, "Do You Make Mistakes in English?" The average reader would probably respond with "Who doesn't?" and turn the page. But the word "These" intrigues the reader. Which mistakes? Do other people make the same mistakes? Perhaps they make even worse mistakes. So the word "These" impels the reader to investigate. The word "These" also implies some free help just for reading the ad—a specific reward for the time the reader will spend.[7]

---

* This classic ad is probably the most often repeated ad in direct marketing literature. You will find the ad in, *Testing Advertising Methods*, Caples 1974, p. 306; *Building A Mail Order Business*, William. A. Cohen, 1991, p. 188; *My First 60 Years in Advertising*, Maxwell Sackheim, 1970, p. 79; and *The 100 Greatest Advertisements*, Julian Lewis Watkins, 1959, p. 68.

[7] John Caples, *Making Ads Pay*, 1957, pages 77-82.

Case Study No. 2

"The Anatomy of a Long-Term Control". Renoir, the French painter, said "It's in the galleries you learn painting." For those who want to learn to write direct marketing headlines, the best way is probably to study, and analyze successful direct marketing headlines; headlines that have been repeated year after year.

„Ich schlafe nicht!
Ich lerne Englisch!"

Und genauso können Sie mit LINGUAPHONE

- Englisch
- Französisch
- Italienisch
- Spanisch

oder eine andere von 28 Sprachen lernen.

Denn mit einer Sprache mehr – sind Sie wer!

Erleben Sie mit Linguaphone, wie leicht und vergnüglich Sprachenlernen sein kann: Von der ersten Studienstunde an HÖREN — VERSTEHEN und SPRECHEN Sie — auch ganz ohne Vorkenntnisse. Sie lernen zu Hause, in Ihrer Freizeit, mit pädagogisch und technisch in über 60jähriger Lehrerfahrung ausgereiftem Studienmaterial und individueller Betreuung.

Keiner lehrt weltweit mehr Menschen mehr Sprachen besser im Selbst- und Fernstudium als Linguaphone. Sollte die 5millionenfach bewährte Erfolgsmethode nicht auch die Ihre werden können?

Wenn Sie sich ja gefragt haben: **„Welche ist für mich die schnellste, leichteste, gründlichste und obendrein preiswerteste Methode, zu Hause Sprachen zu lernen?", dann trennen Sie diese Seite heraus und senden Sie sie ausgefüllt ein.**

Alle Lehrgänge zugelassen von der Staatlichen Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht, Köln, ZFU.

Axel Andersson Akademie
Fachbereich Linguaphone
Neumann-Reichardt-Str. 27-33
2000 Hamburg 70
Tel. 040/658 09 01 (24-Std.-Service)

Alles ist kostenlos und unverbindlich.

JA, bitte senden Sie mir KOSTENLOS und UNVERBINDLICH PER POST ihre neue 28seitige Sprachenbroschüre (für Das-Beste-Leser ab 18 Jahren) mit Probestudiumsangebot und eine Probekassette (spezielle Kassette für Englisch, Französisch, Spanisch, Italienisch; allgemeine Kassette für die übrigen Sprachen).

Ich interessiere mich für (Bitte ein X setzen)

○ Afrikaans*	○ Finnisch*	○ Niederländisch
○ Amerikanisch	○ Französisch (Kassette)	○ Norwegisch
○ Arabisch*	○ Französisch (Portugiesisch)	○ Polnisch*
○ Bahasa Indonesia*	○ Hindi*	○ Portugiesisch
○ Bahasa Malaysia*	○ Irisch*	○ Russisch
○ Chinesisch*	○ Isländisch*	○ Schwedisch
○ Dänisch*	○ Italienisch	○ Serbokroatisch
○ Deutsch für Ausländer	○ Japanisch	○ Spanisch (Kastilisch)
○ Englisch (Kassette)	○ Neu-Griechisch	○ Spanisch (Südamerik.)
○ Englisch (Portugiesisch)	○ Neu-Hebräisch*	○ Walisisch*

* mit engl. Unterrichtssprache

Vorname Name

Straße/Hausnummer

Postleitzahl/Wohnort BZ 57

Beruf Geburtsdatum

GRATIS

GRATISKASSETTE
Englisch, Französisch, Italienisch, Spanisch

"I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!"—A control ad for 7 years. A strong benefit headline built into a dialog.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The headline, "I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!" has not been beaten for several years. It has sold more home study language courses in Europe than any other language ad.

Here are nine reasons why this headline is such a winner:

1. The headline, "I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!" is selective; it selects the right audience.

2. The headline gives the prospect a big promise.

3. The headline and the picture work together as a team to convey the same message.

4. The headline and illustration make it easy for the reader to visualize the benefits. Don't force prospects to think. Do their thinking for them.

5. The headline contains only two thought units. One thought unit, "I'm Not Sleeping," the second "I'm Learning English." Three thought units are considered a maximum in a headline. More thought units slow the understanding of the headline.

6. The headline is understood at a glance. My rule is: If your headline does not hit the audience in a few seconds with a prime benefit, motive and need, drop your headline and rethink your project.

7. The headline is a paradox, but a paradox with a benefit. Compare it with these other paradox headlines:

   "How a Bald-Headed Barber Saved My Hair"

   "Beat the Races by Picking Losers"

   "Get Fat by Making Others Thin"

   "Eat and Get Slim"

   "Hollywood Paid Two Million Dollars for this Book—You Can Have it Free"

   "A New Way to Learn How to Paint by Painting Masterpieces Right from the Start"

8. The characteristics mentioned above are those that most successful direct marketing headlines could or should have. But that is not enough to make the ad a breakthrough. The secret of the success is that the headline ingredients have been built into **a dialog** consisting of only six words.

   The dialog headline, "I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!" contains all the important criteria. This headline is a good example of how to use a dialog in a headline. The headline states the answer to a question and implies that the question has been asked. (Milt Pierce)[8]. What's going on in this picture? Somebody is entering a room and asks "What are you doing?" and the answer is "I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!" You are in the middle of a dialog, a dialog that involves the reader; you are not reading a sales pitch. The headline also sounds different from any other headline in the magazine.

   Dialog headlines are rarely used. "The 300 Best Headlines Ever Written,"[9] a brochure published in 1993, doesn't contain a single dialog headline. You will find nothing about dialog headlines in, for instance, the books by John Caples, Vic Schwab, and Maxwell Sackheim, or in any book on copywriting.

   Don't confuse the dialog headline with a testimonial headline just because both use quotation marks. There is a world of difference between them and just as much difference in what they can do for you.

   When used imaginatively, dialog headlines can suggest entirely new ways to emphasize key benefits.

   Creating an appropriate setting for a dialog headline is usually not a problem. For instance, just two people phoning is sufficient to serve as a starting point for a dialog headline. The balloon in a comic panel can also be used as a starting point for a dialog headline.

9. The headline "I'm Not Sleeping! I'm Learning English!" is successful not only because of what it says, but it is successful be-

[8] Ogilvy, David: *Confessions of an Advertising Man*, 1963.
[9] Group M Publishing, Hot Springs, AK 71901

cause of what the headline and picture **imply**. An implicit message can be more powerful than the explicit one.

Combine your maximum headline with a dramatic visual interpretation of the same message. With the right illustration, a headline with an illustration will beat a headline **without** an illustration.

Before you sit down to write your headline, ask yourself this question: "If I had unlimited godlike powers and could grant my prospective customer the biggest benefit I could possibly imagine he or she would ideally want from my product or service, what would that be?" Write down your answer. (Ted Nicholas) That may help you determine the key benefits, the right appeal and the right selling idea of your product or service. It takes a remarkable insight to hit the "hot button," but there are few elements which are more important. Using the "wrong big or key benefit element" is a serious handicap.

Key benefits in the form of a dialog may produce a breakthrough headline and a breakthrough ad!

Case Study No. 3

The headline, "Choose Your Vocational or Educational Goals Here," proves how important the illustration and the layout are for your ad.

"Choose Your Vocational or Educational Goals Here." This ad has been a control for more than 21 years.

This ad shows how the maximum headline illustration and layout together produce a longtime control. This is an ad that has been a control for 21 years. No ad has beaten it so far. It's the most often repeated headline of all direct marketing headlines in the German-speaking part of Europe.

In this case the secret of success is the headline and the layout, how the offer is dramatized in the layout, the number of courses, and the attractive training goals. Ninety percent of the rest of the ad is devoted to listing the courses like the Publishers Clearing House stamp sheet lists the magazines offered. In every "stamp" or box you find the name of a course or vocational goal, a symbol and a number for that course on the top.

Under the headline the four lines explain the offer and what to do. "Select your course below! Write the number of the course chosen in the coupon below (not shown in illustration) and you will receive the 4-part free offer shown to the left without any obligation.

Our free kit proves that you can reach your vocational or educational goal at home in your spare time."

The headline selects the right audience. The layout dramatizes the course program. As with Publishers Clearing House and American Family Publishers stamp sheets, the courses are listed. We don't try to sell the individual courses on the stamp or in the boxes. We dramatize the offer and make it easy to ask for the free kit, information about the course they are interested in. It's a command headline that automatically leads the reader into the ad, involves him. The reader knows immediately what he is supposed to do. It's very clear to him what he gets free, his reward for filling out the coupon. No obligation. No salesman will call.

This headline and layout have been successful, not only as a full-page ad, but also as a freestanding insert, as a page plus a tipped-in card or a bind-in card. The minimum format has always been one page. If we reduce this ad to half a page, we may not get the position in the magazine that we want. We are always up front, never in the middle of the book or at the end of the magazine. If we have the ad with tipped-in or bind-in card, we want to be the first tipped-in or bind-in card in the magazine.

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* This list is not complete. Whenever I have quoted material from these books and others, I have tried to give due credit, but in a few cases it has not been possible because in the files available to me, no source, date, publishers, or author were given.

Chapter Four

How to Write Ad Copy

by
Colleen McGuire
Director of Marketing Services
NRI Schools

The Author

Colleen McGuire, a 1978 graduate of Georgetown University with a B.A. degree in English, has worked for NRI Schools in Washington, D.C. for 15 years. Colleen began her career with NRI as an editorial assistant, copy editing and producing NRI lesson texts. She transferred to the marketing department in 1983, initially as a specialist responding to prospects' requests for information about NRI courses. Colleen moved on to the role of marketing copywriter before advancing into her current management position.

Today, Colleen is responsible for overseeing the development of all NRI ads, catalogs, and follow-up promotional materials. She has won numerous awards, including the MAXI (presented by the Direct Marketing Association of Washington) and several McGraw-Hill Professional Recognition Awards.

Introduction

"They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano
But When I Started To Play!"

So begins an ad written by the esteemed John Caples over half a century ago. Today, advertising professionals still describe Caples' creation as one of the most memorable ads ever written. (See page 62 for the full ad.)

It was an ad for a home study school, the U.S. School of Music.

You shouldn't be surprised that home study advertisers excel at creating effective direct response print ads. Home study advertising has a long, rich tradition dating back almost to the founding of the first home study schools in the nineteenth century. Schools discovered quickly that print, particularly magazines, offered an ideal way to reach a targeted audience and generate prospects likely to enroll.

Today, other media—television, direct mail, supermarket "take-one" brochures, even on-line computer networks—vie for schools' advertising dollars. But for NRI and many other schools, magazine advertising still reigns as the most effective medium for generating high-quality leads.

In 1993, NRI ads will appear in over 400 national magazines. Here are some of the lessons we've learned over the years about developing winning print ads.

It All Begins With Research

Since the mid-1980's, NRI has introduced more than 20 new courses in fields as diverse as gunsmithing and children's literature. To launch a new course successfully, we must execute a well-thought-out marketing effort, including the creation of ads, catalogs, and follow-up promotional mailings.

Before arriving at the point where we're ready to begin marketing a new course, months of preliminary research may be involved. Marketing managers and copywriters meet with course developers and editors to discuss course objectives, content, equipment involved, projects included, and the market targeted by the course being introduced.

We also research the field, accumulating statistics on job opportunities, salaries, job security, and more. Our job as marketers is far easier if we can point to optimistic growth projections in the career field. For example, when we introduced our Legal Assistant course in 1988, the Bureau of Labor Statistics had just named the paralegal field the **fastest-growing job field in the U.S.** That's a powerful argument for enrolling in a paralegal course.

We go on to examine our own experiences with NRI students over the years—their wants, their needs, what motivates them to enroll and study. By understanding our students, we're better able to promote those aspects of our training that appeal to them most.

And, of course, we research the competition—not only other home study schools offering training in the same field, but also trade schools, community colleges, universities, even books, videos, and magazines addressing the same subject.

I can't overemphasize the importance of this preliminary research. By taking time to know our product, the field, our students, and the competition—long before a word of promotional copy is written—we put ourselves in the best possible position to create effective marketing materials.

The Role of the Ad

NRI, like many other schools, uses a "two-step" marketing approach. The first step is to generate a qualified inquiry. The actual order, or enrollment, is generated by the second step in the marketing process: the catalog and follow-up promotional materials.

The ad plays a pivotal role in the success of NRI's marketing efforts, because it's not enough that the ad generate large volumes of inquiries; it must generate inquiries that have a good likelihood of converting to enrollments.

Historically, NRI courses have been more expensive than those offered by competitors, mainly because NRI includes hands-on equipment as part of the training materials. It follows that NRI promotional materials have also been more expensive than those developed by competitors, since prospects need that much more "convincing" to commit to NRI's higher tuition.

As a result, NRI ads must drive in sufficiently large numbers of inquiries to ensure the desired number of enrollments, yet at the same time discourage "curiosity seekers" who do not have a serious interest in enrolling. Since the cost of mailing NRI catalogs and follow-ups is so high, it's in our best interest financially to generate the most qualified leads possible.

An NRI ad, then, must maintain a delicate balance. It must be compelling and persuasive enough to motivate the reader to

inquire, but it must also employ techniques that actually **prevent** unqualified prospects from responding at all.

Beginning the Ad

Once we've gathered all the facts about a new course and decided on an overall marketing strategy, we embark on the first step in the marketing creative process: writing the full-page ad.

Over the years, the full-page ad has been a mainstay of NRI advertising, not only because of its high visibility in magazines, but also because it gives us enough room to describe our training in sufficient detail, thereby helping to qualify the prospect. Although NRI has in recent years used a good number of alternative ad sizes, the full-page ad still dominates.

By working on the ad first, we're forced to determine our primary selling themes and crystallize our selling message. We have to ask ourselves basic questions: How do we reach our primary market? What is the most important benefit of the training? What makes our course unique?

Traditional NRI courses—courses in electronics, trade, or technical fields—generally have common selling themes:

- Advance on the job, make more money, start a business of your own
- Get practical experience with hands-on equipment you train with and keep
- Study at your own pace
- Get technical assistance from NRI's staff of experienced instructors

Lately, though, NRI has been moving into "nontraditional" fields. For these courses, we find that we may have to embrace new selling themes, or at least emphasize different training benefits. When we introduced our Fiction Writing and Nonfiction Writing courses, for example, we discovered that making money was **not** the primary motivation for students taking a writing course. **Getting published** was the dream goal, with making money a secondary objective. And, although these courses include a com-

puter and word processing software, the ad copy ultimately placed greater emphasis on the personal, one-on-one instructor-student relationship developed in the course--for a budding writer, an even more powerful benefit than having a computer.

Elements of a Typical Full-Page Ad

A typical NRI full-page ad includes most or all of the following elements:

- Headline
- "Eyebrow" (lead-in benefit placed above the headline) or bold subhead placed below the headline
- Starburst highlighting an important feature or benefit
- Main visual
- Secondary visual
- Bold lead-in copy stating main premise of ad
- Persuasive body copy
- Benefit-oriented subheads throughout copy
- Urge to act
- Response device (coupon)

Writing a Good Headline

David Ogilvy, advertising guru, states: "On the average, five times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy. It follows that unless your headline sells your product, you have wasted 90 per cent of your money."

Here are a few ways to get your readers into the body copy and persuade them to respond to your ad.

Make sure your headline promotes a desirable benefit to your reader. Some successful benefit-oriented NRI headlines include:

- *"We can free the writer in you."*
- *"Build a high-paying career, even a business of your own, in computer programming."*
- *"Be the boss of your own bookkeeping and accounting business."*

To determine exactly **what** the most compelling benefit of your course is, go back to the basics. No matter how the world changes, people are motivated by fundamental wants and needs: to be smarter, to make more money, to be liked and respected, to attain security.

As Edward L. Nash, editor in chief of *The Direct Marketing Handbook*, states: "The truth is that people's wants and needs haven't changed much over time. From the very beginning, there have been only a few basic psychological motivations for human behavior. What **has** changed are the vast number of **choices** we each have today—the sheer variety of products and services that our grandparents could never even have imagined."

Therefore, your ad—beginning with the headline—must first promise a benefit that appeals to the reader, then go on to persuade the reader that **your** school is the best able to provide that benefit.

Make your headline an appropriate length to communicate your message. Advertisers disagree among themselves as to whether headlines should be short and pithy or long and descriptive. At NRI, we tend to use longer headlines (10 or more words), but we also have headlines as short as four words (*"Be a Home Inspector!"*). Often, though, what we leave out of a short headline can be communicated through other highly visible techniques near the headline, such as eyebrows, bold subheads, and starbursts.

Try to get the name of your school in the headline. Many NRI headlines start with the NRI name (*"Only NRI gives you . . ."*). This technique immediately distinguishes our message from that of the competition, a particularly important factor if our ads look similar to those run by competitors in the same publication.

Once your headline has done its job—to entice the reader to stop and read your ad—other elements of the ad must take over.

Eyebrows, Bold Subheads, and Starbursts

As mentioned earlier, headlines can be enhanced and reinforced by other advertising techniques.

Eyebrows running above the main headline can provide additional benefits to support the headline message. **Bold subheads** appear below the main headline and serve a similar supporting role. You may decide to use one or both of these devices for maximum impact.

For example, the simple message of the headline in NRI's Home Inspection ad (*"Be a Home Inspector!"*) is strengthened by both an eyebrow and a bold subhead:

"Be your own boss in one of today's fastest-growing fields." (eyebrow)

"Let NRI training be your first step toward a business of your own where you can earn as much as $1,000 a day! Many home inspectors are doing it already . . . and now, so can you!" (bold subhead)

Starbursts, too, can communicate additional benefits about your course. At NRI, we often use starbursts to emphasize important features of the equipment included in the course (*"Includes IBM-compatible computer!"*) or to highlight something new (*"NEW! 80 meg hard disk drive!"*). While some designers shy away from using starbursts because they seem too gaudy, starbursts can be an eye-catching and effective technique for getting your message across to the reader.

Visuals

Main Visuals. A compelling main visual is essential to a good home study ad. But just what is a compelling visual?

For many NRI courses, we use models surrounded by the equipment included in the course, posed as if they're students working with the equipment—installing a disk drive on the computer, removing the back of a TV set, programming at the computer keyboard.

In other instances, we show a visual depicting the end result of our training—a successful-looking individual on the job. Our Home Inspection course ads, for example, show an individual actually inspecting a home.

Still other ads feature spokespersons—NRI's president, the director of a course area, a successful graduate, or a well-known endorser (notably Richard Petty for our Automotive Servicing course).

For ads that do not involve a spokesperson, we use professional models. (Occasionally, we use in-house staff members if they project the right image.) Why do we use professional, attractive models? That's a question we've been asked many times, even by our own staff. The answer, to me, is obvious.

Although the models may indeed be better looking than 95% of our prospects, people reading the ad want to place themselves in the picture. And people like to envision themselves better than they actually are. Good-looking models—as long as they fit the general demographic parameters of the market (early 30's, etc.)—will attract the attention of a greater share of a magazine's readership and lend credibility to the course being promoted.

Secondary Visuals. Secondary visuals can also be important to a successful ad. In NRI's case, we often use the computer or a shot of all the materials and equipment included in the course (known affectionately as a "goodies" shot). This shot is often at the lower left corner of the ad or near the coupon.

Secondary visuals are especially important in ads where we use a spokesperson or a model actually working in the field. The secondary visual makes the connection between the ultimate objective of the course (a successful new career) and the means of achieving that goal (NRI hands-on training).

Persuasive Body Copy

Now that you've drawn in the reader with a powerful, benefit-oriented headline and a compelling main visual, you're ready to generate a truly qualified inquiry through the body copy of your ad.

While advertisers debate the relative merits of short headlines

versus long headlines, creators of successful direct response ads generally agree: long copy works better than short copy, particularly if you're promoting something as expensive as a home study course. Here's what David Ogilvy has to say on the subject:

"I believe . . . that advertisements with long copy convey the impression that you have **something important to say,** whether people read the copy or not . . . . In split-run tests, long copy invariably outpulls short copy." (*Ogilvy on Advertising*, p.88)

Long copy gives you a chance to truly sell your training—to emphasize the main benefits, describe all the important features, and convincingly encourage the reader to inquire.

But just because your copy is long does not mean that it will do the job. Your copy must be well-written, logically flowing from paragraph to paragraph and building a believable rationale with every word.

As I've set about writing copy for NRI ads, I've tried to keep these techniques in mind:

1. Use short paragraphs.

2. Vary the length of your sentences.

3. Use everyday, conversational language—for example, use contractions to give the ad a "friendlier" feel.

4. On the other hand, when you're describing training in a technical field, the judicious use of jargon can convince readers they'll learn something they don't already know by taking your course.

5. Write in the second person singular to give the reader the impression the ad is speaking directly to him or her.

6. Keep in mind what motivates people to act, and steer your copy toward your reader's primary wants and needs. (*"Our course will help you make money in a new career or a business of your own" . . . "You're backed up by our staff of experienced instructors" . . . "It's easy to get started."*)

7. Support your statements wherever possible with compelling

statistics from objective third parties. (*"Jobs for paralegals will double in the next 10 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics."*)

8. It's not necessary to be strikingly "original." Know what works and why, and don't try to re-invent the wheel with every ad.

Benefit-Oriented Subheads

The truly interested reader will devour every word of your ad copy, but only about 5% of all people who see your ad will take the time to read every word. That's why it's important to break up your ad copy with benefit-oriented subheads that allow the reader to quickly scan the ad and get all the important information at a glance.

Not only do bold subheads throughout the copy telegraph important selling messages to the reader, but they also make the copy more inviting and easier to read.

Subheads can vary in length from a few words to 10 or more. But whatever their length, subheads should communicate an important benefit to the prospect. Here are a few examples:

- *"Earn while you learn!"*
- *"NEW! Get inside a 486sx/25 MHz computer system . . . and experience all the power and speed of* ***today's*** *computer technology!"*
- *"Training includes professional tools"*
- *"No previous experience necessary"*

Urge To Act

Perhaps your most important subhead is your last subhead, which should read something like this, *"Send today for your FREE catalog!"*

In direct response advertising, the reader must be told plainly what he is expected to do—call an 800 number or complete and mail in a coupon or reply card. If this message is unclear, your best efforts with the other elements of the ad may be wasted.

If the information the prospect will receive is free, say so—in all caps, preferably. There's no more powerful word in advertising than the word "free." (Keep in mind *NHSC Business Standards* on the use of the word "free." See page 6 of this Handbook.)

Before the coupon appears, it's a good idea to provide your school's name and address. Magazines have a long shelf life and pass from reader to reader. Having your name and address set apart from the coupon ensures that readers will know where to send their inquiry if the coupon has already been clipped.

Coupon

Virtually all NRI ads include a coupon—even if we intend to use a bound-in card in conjunction with the ad.

The coupon should be plainly visible at a glance, usually set off by dashed lines so that the reader knows he should cut it out and send it in. The most effective coupons restate the main benefit the reader will enjoy by inquiring, *"YES! Send me your FREE catalog describing how NRI can help me make money, advance on the job, or start a business of my own in computer programming!"*

Ask for as little information as you need from the prospect to make it as easy as possible for the reader to inquire. By asking for too much information, you risk "turning off" potential students who are not yet willing to commit to your course.

Other Considerations

Ad Layout. Even the best-written ad copy can fail if it does not work in concert with a pleasing graphical layout. One effective rule of thumb when laying out an ad is to remember the "Z rule." This rule states that the ad should "track" from left to right across the top, then diagonally down the page from left to right again, ending at the response device in the lower right corner. The reader's eye follows the ad from headline to main visual to secondary visual to coupon. An ad that follows the "Z rule" has a balanced look and leads the reader inevitably to the action device.

Other tips to keep in mind when designing an ad include:

- **Always** use serif typeface for body copy. San-serif is fine for

headlines and subheads, but it's difficult to read in copy of more than a few lines.

- Use reversed-out type only sparingly—in starbursts, for example, or eyebrows. Reversing out large blocks of type makes the copy unreadable.
- Set your type in a readable point size—usually no smaller than 8 point.
- Make your text columns a readable width. In general, the smaller your typeface, the narrower the column width should be.
- Set your headlines and subheads in caps-lowercase, **not** all caps—again, to encourage readability.
- Make your copy more interesting visually by the use of numbered lists or bullets.

Other Sizes of Ads. This chapter has focused primarily on full-page ads. But NRI has in recent years joined other schools in the use of "fractional" ads—half-page, third-page, sixth-page, twelfth-page, and 1" classified ads.

Although they run the risk of generating less qualified inquiries, these smaller ads can prove cost-effective in magazines that have particularly large circulations. They're also helpful in maintaining a presence in magazines throughout the traditionally slower months of the year.

Of course, smaller ads demand that certain "rules" be adapted to fit the limited space available. Yet while the details may have to go, the essence of your selling message must remain. You must show how your training will clearly benefit the reader, and you must convince the reader to send for information today.

Revising Existing Ads

Creating an ad for a new course is one thing—but what about all those ads you created for the courses that were new last year and the year before?

Some of the very best ads can run for years, even decades, with-

out any appreciable loss in response rates. But those ads are rare. Our statistics show that a new ad can help boost response for an older course. Typically, it's a good idea to give a "fresh look" to an ad every two to three years.

At NRI, a sure-fire catalyst for changing an existing ad is an update or revision to the course—new coverage of an emerging topic, for example, or all-new equipment included in the course. If an existing course does have new features, it's a good idea to have the ad itself look new. That way, the ad immediately telegraphs to the reader that we're not talking about the same old thing.

A word of caution, however: The need for a "new look" does not become license to disregard the rules of good direct response advertising. "New" is only better if it generates the desired results.

Conclusion

Direct response advertisers, including home study schools, have created a body of work that spans more than a century. In that time, thousands of techniques have been tested, analyzed, and refined. Today, new techniques are being tested continually, in an ongoing effort to expand the pool of qualified prospects.

Fortunately for all of us trying to create direct response ads, there's a wealth of resources available to help. The Direct Marketing Association, located in New York, and its affiliated chapters throughout the country offer seminars, newsletters, and expositions focused on direct response. If you're not already a member of a DMA-affiliated group, I encourage you to join.

For your library, I recommend anything written by David Ogilvy, John Caples, Ed Nash, Joan Throckmorton, or Denison Hatch. These are the pros, and their experiences can help you create direct response ads that have the best possible chance for success.[1]

[1] Please refer to the Bibliography at the end of Chapter Three for a more complete reading list on direct response marketing and the suggested reading list found on page 119.

A Famous Ad

"Can he really play!" a girl whispered. "Heavens, no!" Arthur exclaimed. "He never played a note in his life."

They Laughed When I Sat Down At the Piano But When I Started to Play!—

ARTHUR had just played "The Rosary." The room rang with applause. I decided that this would be a dramatic moment for me to make my debut. To the amazement of all my friends I strode confidently over to the piano and sat down.

"Jack is up to his old tricks," somebody chuckled. The crowd laughed. They were Liebesträume died away, the room resounded with a sudden roar of applause. I found myself surrounded by excited faces. How my friends carried on! Men shook my hand—wildly congratulated me—pounded me on the back in their enthusiasm! Everybody was exclaiming with delight—plying me with rapid questions.... "Jack! Why Demonstration Lesson. I was amazed to see how easy it was to play this new way. Then I sent for the course.

"When the course arrived I found it was just as the ad said—as easy as A. B. C.! And as the lessons continued they got easier and easier. Before I knew it I was playing all the pieces I liked best. Nothing stopped

Frank Rowsome, Jr., *They Laughed When I Sat Down: An Informal History of Advertising.* New York; McGraw-Hill, 1959.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Chapter Five

Testing Home Study Advertising

by
John F. Thompson
Consultant

The Author

Jack Thompson is a veteran of more than 35 years in the home study field. He joined NRI, now McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center in 1956, as a student service correspondent, became Director of Advertising in 1961, Vice President for Marketing in 1965 and Executive Vice President in 1971 under McGraw-Hill. In 1973, he was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of CEC and its NRI/CREI divisions. In 1985, he left McGraw-Hill and started his own consulting business serving the proprietary school field.

Since his home study career began, Jack has served on virtually every NHSC standing committee plus over 30 accrediting visits as an examiner. In 1976 and 1977, he served as President of the NHSC. This was followed by six years as a member and Vice Chairman of the Accrediting Commission. He was the recipient of two NHSC Distinguished Service Awards. Jack also served as Director of the Mail Advertising Club of Washington for many years and received its Direct Marketing Leader Award in 1977. He holds an MBA from Loyola College, Baltimore. Jack continues to serve as a school consultant from his home in Edgewater, Maryland, near Annapolis.

Introduction

There is an axiom which suggests that half the money spent on advertising is completely wasted. The real problem is that no one

has come up with a scientific formula to determine exactly **which half** actually goes out the window as wasted dollars.

Whether the actual figure is half, or more or less, is irrelevant. But it is a fact that, each year, billions of dollars are wasted by thousands of companies because advertising fails in its objective of attracting buyers for a product or service.

If you are the typical home study school owner, manager, the person responsible for advertising, or all three of these, this chapter concerns your favorite "what if" exercise. I am referring to those provocative, often tormenting questions that creep into your mind daily—and sometimes in the middle of the night. Questions like:

- How can I reduce my lead cost by 10%, 20%, 30%, or more?
- How can I increase my leads without adversely affecting my enrollment closure rate?
- What is the bottom line impact if I improve my closure rate by X%?
- If a one-sixth page ad produces X leads, what is the incremental value of increasing it to a quarter page, a half, or larger?
- Am I sending the right number of follow-up mailings to my leads, or too few, or too many?
- How can I offset continually rising ad, printing and postage costs?
- Are my tuition prices and monthly terms too high, too low, or just right?
- What are the best and worst months for advertising and for special offers?
- How can I be absolutely sure I'm using the right ad copy and headline? How about ad size? Position in publication? Color? Frequency? Classified vs. display? TV? Radio? etc.

Case Histories—Take Heart!

If some of these questions are a familiar part of your mental routine, you're not alone! You've had lots of company among your NHSC colleagues over the years. Most encouraging is the fact that their frustrations have led to many unique, yes even exciting, advertising success stories. For example, a medium size school had rotated six different ads on a regular basis. Through testing, they discovered their strategy was completely wrong. The school revised 12 words in the headline and subhead of one ad and increased its leads by nearly 20%! The other five ads were discontinued and the revised ad ran for more than three years with the same impressive results, month after month.

Another school revised the layout and copy of one page in its follow-up packet and improved its closure by 9%. That one page was the enrollment application!

Recently, another NHSC school, facing the dilemma of rising advertising costs, was able to reduce the number of its follow-up mailings from 6 to 4 without affecting the conversion rate or quality of enrollments. The savings—more than $65,000 annually.

A school that had its ad budget spread more or less evenly over 12 months found it was paying a 35% premium for July and August leads compared with January and February. Through testing and "fine tuning" the seasonal factor, leads increased by 14% with **no** increase in annual advertising expenditures.

These are just a few of many success stories and the impressive results to be gained through a well conceived, planned and executed advertising testing program for your school. When I say advertising, I am referring to virtually everything you do to attract new students to your school. Indeed, without an organized, enforced, permanent testing program, you are bound to remain in the ranks of those organizations that waste substantial portions of their advertising dollars.

Before You Begin

It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that before you can begin a testing program, you and those who play a role in the production of leads and enrollments, must become total believers in, and committed to, the concepts of testing. Sounds simple

enough. Yet for a myriad of reasons (mostly invalid) there are **still** some NHSC schools that do little or no testing of any kind. At the other extreme, there are a handful of schools with highly sophisticated, computer based testing methods that equal or surpass those of the best direct marketing firms in the nation. The information in this chapter will likely be elementary to those schools well versed in testing and tracking.

There are also some basic caveats to consider before you begin. For instance:

1. Be absolutely sure the market for your course(s) is strong and viable. It is going to be difficult to improve enrollments through testing in a market just isn't there or is in a declining mode. If this is the case, you face a different set of problems. You might be better off to embark on a program of new course development more suited to today's market.

2. Choose the right media for testing. True, one benefit of testing is to help you make intelligent media decisions. But with numerous media choices—magazines, TV, radio, direct mail, telephone, take-one cards, co-ops, etc., you need to decide, initially, what is best for you and your budget? Pay attention to what other schools are doing. If a school similar to yours consistently uses a particular ad medium, it can probably be made to work for you.

3. Be sure your overall proposition as a school is sound and has genuine as well as perceived value. Over the years, a few naive entrepreneurs believed that starting a home study school was like finding the lost treasure of Sierra Madre. Their strategy was to take a book on any subject, call each chapter a lesson, reprint it cheaply with a few exams thrown in and presto, you're a school! Fortunately for NHSC schools and their millions of satisfied graduates, it has never worked quite this way. Today's accredited schools prosper through their ability to offer top quality courses that stand the test of time and comparison with other forms of education.

4. The final caveat is, be sure to delegate responsibility for advertising and testing to a single individual, be it yourself or someone else. In small schools, the marketing function sometimes becomes a fill-in job for anyone with spare time. Whoever is responsible for advertising must learn it, love it and live it. Your school's future depends on it.

Testing and the NHSC Business Standards

The *NHSC Business Standards* are specific and prescriptive when it comes to certain aspects of advertising such as using help wanted columns, use of the word "guarantee" and adhering to the minimum tuition refund policy. But the Standards do not preclude—within limits—testing of marketing ideas. Let's summarize the Standards on the subject of testing:

Tuition Prices and Terms

The Standards require that the total course price must be the same for all persons at a given time. If you are testing a new tuition price, all prospects who enroll during the test period must be given the same tuition.

Terms of payment can be tested and varied among different students as long as the total course price is the same for all persons at the same time.

Discount offers, tested or permanent, must be bona fide and must have a published termination date.

Announced tuition increases must be bona fide and must give the effective date of this increase.

Advertising Copy

The Standards do not prevent the testing of ad copy, new offers, bonuses, various headlines, etc. However, the word "free" may not be used to describe any item or service which is regularly included in a course. It is acceptable to state: "Send for a free catalog." It is unacceptable to state, "Enroll now and get a free computer," if the computer is an integral, regular part of the course.

New Course Ideas

Running test ads for a proposed course which does not exist is in violation of the Standards. Bear in mind that the Accrediting Commission is responsive to schools seeking to develop and promote new courses and in fact, allows schools to submit just

50% of a course for evaluation (at least half of which must be in "camera-ready" form, the balance of which may be in manuscript/draft form). It generally takes about 6 weeks for Commission approval of a new course.

Getting Through the Maze of What to Test

Consider what a wonderful, unique advantage you have in depending upon advertising and direct marketing for all or some of your leads. Why? Simply because the results are measurable. AT&T doesn't know for sure that its ad in *Business Week* will sell more long distance services. Coca-Cola doesn't know for sure that its ad in *Family Circle* is going to sell more soft drinks. But you know exactly how many leads and enrollments were produced from the ad you ran 2 years ago in *Popular Science*—or any other magazine. Thousands of general advertisers would relish the opportunity you have for accurately tracking results.

Remember that proper testing takes time. As the chart will show, one month after running a magazine ad, you will have received only 55% of the total leads that are likely from that effort. In the

Two Step Direct Response Marketing

Estimated Monthly Inquiry and Sales after Magazine Ad has Appeared

Months Since Ad Appeared	Percent of Inquiries After Ad Has Appeared	Percent of Sales After Ad Has Appeared
1	55%	20%
2	70%	40%
3	80%	60%
4	85%	72%
5	90%	80%
6	93%	85%
7	95%	90%
8	96%	93%
9	97%	95%
10	98%	97%
11	99%	99%
12	100%	100%

second month, 70%, etc. If you are converting these leads by mail, there is a further delay factor—20% of total likely enrollments received after 1 month, 40% after 2 months, etc. Magazines usually represent the maximum delay. Newspapers, TV, radio and telephone generate a much faster response. But under the best of conditions, it takes time for accurate analysis of results.

With this in mind, here is cardinal rule number one for testing:

- **Don't Test Trivia**

Right now, you could come up with a dozen or more things you'd like to test to improve leads, closure, collections, completion rates, etc. But don't fall into the "trivia trap"—that is, attempting to test vague or insignificant items that contribute little or nothing to your success.

My own ideas of trivia include fancy art work, unconventional type styles, borders, logos, caps vs. upper case, paper color, four page letters vs. three, and a host of other frills. While some of these may be tested to some degree, you can waste valuable weeks and months, and money, and you will rarely learn enough to make meaningful decisions. This leads to cardinal rule number two which is—

- **Test the Big Things**

You already know what is important to your school and its future, course appeal, perceived value, price and terms, completion and graduation rates, leads, closure. So its not difficult to prioritize starting with the "big things."

Now, while you're thinking about it, make a list of three or four items you would most like to test over the next six months. For example, if enrollments are down, it time to find out why and do it fast. If leads are slipping, test new headlines, copy, media. If leads are holding up but closure is down, work on follow-up tests. If enrollment drop is concurrent with a new price/term increase, you may need a test to determine if price resistance is too strong.

In testing print advertising, here is my own list of "big things" to test with regularity. In order, they are:

1. Headline copy
2. Subheads and body copy
3. Size of ad
4. Photos or line art
5. Reply format (coupon, insert cards, 800 number, etc.)
6. Position of ad

Next is testing normal follow-up materials. Special offers such as lowered down payment or other incentives call for separate testing. Here is my priority list:

1. Catalog or brochure (nothing in the package is more crucial!)
2. Enrollment application (price, terms and overall design)
3. Cover letter
4. Envelope (teaser copy, size, window, etc.)
5. Number of follow-ups
6. Number of mailings.

The development of superior ads and mailing pieces should represent the primary continuous testing for your school. Depending upon your marketing style, other tests might include telemarketing scripts and offers, TV and radio, lesson packaging, motivational letters, mailing lists and various incentives for improving student progress.

Seasonal Factor

The seasonal factor can vary from one school to another depending upon courses offered and media used. As a guide, however, the chart on page 71 represents tens of thousands of leads received by a school over several years. My own impression is that this chart is quite accurate and aplicable to most schools, and is a safe guide for allocating annual advertising expenditures. Here is one instance where the testing has been done for you.

Split-Run Testing

At last count, more than 75 magazines make split-runs available to advertisers. For many years, advertisers were limited to simple A-B split run tests whereby one ad is tested against a Control ad. Now, with "telescopic" testing, several ads may be tested simultaneously depending upon a publication's capability and policy.

Direct Response Print Ad Seasonality Indexes

Month	Index	Month	Index
1 February	100	7 December	73
2 January	96	8 April	72
3 March	83	9 August	70
4 October	80	10 May	66
5 September	76	11 July	62
6 November	75	12 June	60

Circulation and geographic distribution must match for a statistically valid test.

Some publications charge a steep premium for split-run tests. It pays to shop around for the best deals among publications that have been or could be productive for you. Some newspapers and co-op mailers also offer split-run deals. Speaking of finding the best deals, whoever buys advertising for your school should have the reputation as an astute, perhaps even "tough," buyer. In addition to frequency discounts, ask for special rates—mail order, schools, classified, shoppers section, etc. There are sometimes special deals available on distressed rates that you may uncover only by asking and prodding.

Now—Proceed With Caution

To quote Bob Stone, one of the leading experts in direct mail, "It is in the area of testing procedures that many a direct marketing program falls apart at the seams. Erroneous procedures lead to faulty conclusions." Here are some areas where procedural breakdown can create havoc in a testing program:

1. **Apples Against Apples.** Always test against known results of an ad or mailing piece which becomes the Control side of your test. Many a test goes awry because unknowns are tested against unknowns or changes are made to the Control side which invalidate the test results.

2. **Test More Than One Medium.** If test results indicate that a specific ad or mailing piece works in a specific spot, don't give up immediately. Re-test using another medium—different magazine, list, etc. Avoid hasty conclusions.

3. **Segment Your Audience by Course.** Questionnaires and interviews will help you profile students for each of your courses. Keep these profiles in mind when choosing media.

4. **Use Proper Codes.** Many a test has failed because of wrong or missing codes. You want to strive for 100% tracking of leads and enrollments. While you may never reach that goal, keep trying. Regardless of what type of coding (keying) system you use, it should clearly identify when and where a lead was generated. Keep the coding system simple enough that it can be understood by others in your school.

5. **Don't Cheapen Your Proposition.** Some schools will spend freely in designing an attractive catalog or brochure then fail to follow through by printing it on the cheapest paper available. Or they'll use photos clipped from magazines instead of originals. Or envelopes that don't fit. Or color out of registration. Or other economizing measures that usually prove self-defeating. The only way to be a quality school is to project quality in all you do. Make this your creed.

Mailings—How Many To Test?

When testing, you don't want to waste money by testing more than necessary or testing too little. While there are no hard and fast rules for determining quantities, the smaller the test, the greater the likelihood of error. Orland Gaeddert, a specialist in circulation research at Time-Life says:

> *"The proper size sample is determined by two factors: (1) The normal variation that is anticipated for any random sample, and (2) the degree of risk that the user is willing to accept."*

Translated this means the smaller the normal variation you are willing to accept, the larger the size of your test mailing. For

example, let's set 10% as your normal variation. If the results of your test show less than a 10% variation between the control and test sides, the results are inconclusive. For the sake of discussion, let's say you mailed 5,000 pieces.

Now, suppose you want to set your normal variation at a lower figure—say 5%. You have now cut your acceptable limit in half. If you consult direct mail probability tables, you will find that in order to cut the acceptable variation in half, you need to increase the mailing size four fold—in this case from 5,000 to 20,000.

It is important that those who are responsible for testing become familiar with probability tables and interpretation based on your own mailing response. It's not as esoteric or difficult as it seems, and there are good reference books on the subject. Two are:

- *Successful Direct Marketing Methods* by Bob Stone, Crain Books, ISBN 0-87251-016-6
- *Direct Marketing: Strategy, Planning, Execution*, by Edward Nash, McGraw-Hill, ISBN 0-07-046019-1

If you are a small school, don't be intimidated by suggestions of large test quantities. You may not even have that many total names on file. Instead, set 10% as your acceptable normal variation and test what you can on a regular and continuous basis. If you want to try mailing lists, co-ops, ValPacs, etc., solicit the cooperation of brokers in testing small quantities. Explain that you expect to be a large school someday soon!

How Often To Test?

The answer is simple—don't ever stop. Always make the assumption you can improve. There are some fine, classic stories about school ads that worked well for years without ever changing a word. But maybe, just maybe, they could have been improved nonetheless. Subtle changes can make significant differences and at the very least, never stop testing headlines.

Conclusion

This chapter is intended as a primer to emphasize one point: if your school depends upon any form of advertising or mailings to produce leads and enrollments, **testing is the most important**

marketing tool you will ever use. This fact will be verified by the marketing experts in any of NHSC's leading schools.

Testing, analyzing, refining . . . testing, analyzing, refining . . . it is an infinite cycle. Learn to be skillful in its application, patient in its progress, entertained by its methodology, and rewarded by its outcome.

Chapter Six

Effective Tracking and Measurement in Direct Response Advertising

by
Richard A. Kruger
President
Professional Career Development Institute

The Author

Dick Kruger founded PCDI in 1987, when he purchased a small real estate appraisal school in Atlanta, Georgia. Since then the company has grown to 16 courses and enrolls thousands of students.

Prior to starting PCDI, Dick held positions in the resident school field. These included: Executive Vice President of Education Management Corporation, and Group Vice President with Bell & Howell/DeVry Schools. He received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Journalism from Franklin College, and his Master's in Public Relations from Ball State University. Dick is an officer and an active member of the Georgia Private School Association.

Introduction

Advertising tracking and testing have always been a critical issue in home study direct marketing. What to test, should we test, how to measure, is tracking important? The reason we go through all this is to improve our bottom line. We test in order to keep profits up and losses down. You hear the same battle cry in the offices of home study marketing executives everywhere, from the multi-story glass high-rise to the one-man rented cubicle. Coast-to-coast, school-to-school, year in and year out, the cry is, "We need to maximize our realization!" That is why we track.

Effective tracking allows us to obtain the best inquiries, students, and media. Tracking serves as a means by which we can ultimately target the kinds of students we want—students who both graduate and complete their tuition commitment.

It is surprisingly simple to implement a basic coding and tracking system, yet not all schools are able to track **and** correctly use the information they collect.

But the very lifeblood of any home study school depends on the marketing department's ability to make informed decisions. It is of primary importance to have the capacity to obtain inquiry/enrollment information and evaluate your own advertising.

Experts agree that successful direct marketing goes hand-in-hand with successful tracking. These home study marketers are able to pinpoint the variables in an advertising campaign and fine-tune each succeeding version based on a study of the results.

In the long run, tracking raises response rates, increases realization and lowers costs. Without tracking, it would be extremely difficult to test effectively creative ideas, publication placement, and course titles. Without tracking, how would we know which ad campaigns were successful and which were complete failures?

Ad Codes: The Real Story

On the surface, ad codes seem cumbersome, time-consuming, even obtrusive. But without them, tracking would be nearly impossible.

Ad codes can run the gamut. Some involve extremely sophisticated and elaborate systems that contain all kinds of hidden information about the ad, the copy, the source, and other variables. Others are of the most rudimentary type, measuring only one or two items. But their jobs are the same: **to tell the advertiser what happened.**

Every ad your school runs—whether it's in a magazine, supermarket take-one, direct mail letter, or television commercial —needs some sort of code or method to measure its success.

The ad code itself should appear in an identifiable location within

the advertisement. It should be large enough so that the prospective student who calls can locate and read it back to the operator, or write it when addressing a letter.

There are many ways to place the ad code in your advertisement without interrupting the copy or the art. Many schools have the ad code as part of the address, such as department AXJS5, (see Figure 1). If the ad contains a Business Reply Card, the ad code should be preprinted on the card itself (see Figure 2).

Most direct marketing ad codes use letters, numbers, or a combination of both. We suggest using a code from six to ten characters in length to avoid mistakes from either the prospect or the operators.

Figure 1

How To

Make More Money

Once You've Taken an ICS Course...

10 WAYS TO MAKE MORE MONEY...

1. GET A JOB
2. GET A BETTER JOB
3. IMPRESS YOUR BOSS
4. GET A RAISE
5. GET INTO THE UNION
6. GET A PROMOTION
7. GET INTO MANAGEMENT
8. GET INTO A NEW CAREER
9. START A PART-TIME BUSINESS
10. START A FULL-TIME BUSINESS

1 WAY TO GET STARTED FAST!

YOUR JOB IS YOUR KEY TO A BETTER LIFE.

With ICS you can choose from 51 career opportunities—in some of today's hottest career fields. Computers! Business! Electronics! Legal Assistant! Or get the knowledge you need to start your own business. Catering! Interior Decorating! Gun Repair! Auto Mechanics! Most courses can be completed in less than a year. Degree programs can be completed in just 2 years. No night classes. No weekend seminars. No time missed from work or play.

AN IDEAL WAY TO LEARN

Our graduates tell us they like home study because it's so convenient and easy to do. Choose your own study hours, go as quickly or slowly as you want. You waste no time traveling to and from class. You never have to miss a paycheck. Yet skilled instructors are ready to help you whenever you ask.

No one can promise success, but if you want more security, more day-to-day satisfaction and a better future, send for free facts and the color brochure of your choice. There's no obligation and no salesman will visit.

GET YOUR DEGREE WITHOUT ATTENDING COLLEGE...OR A CAREER DIPLOMA TO HELP YOU MAKE MORE MONEY

The facts show that specialized career training has helped thousands of people make more money, get better jobs, even start whole new careers. ICS training is the right training for you—whether you want to get your first job—or you want to get your last job!

The choice of more than 10,000,000 men and women and more than 2,000 major corporations is the right choice for you!

- No previous experience needed—even for technical or computer courses!
- Train at home, the hours you choose.
- Go at your own pace—no one rushes you. Talk one-on-one with your instructors just by picking up the phone.
- Exams are all open book—no midnight cramming, no hassles.
- Whatever you need for your course—from a Pentax® camera to Sears Craftsman® tools to an IBM-compatible personal computer—is included and sent right to your home.

MAIL COUPON TODAY FOR FREE FACTS!

ICS SINCE 1891

International Correspondence Schools, Dept. AXJSS3S
925 Oak Street, Scranton, PA 18515

YES! Please send me free facts and full information on how I can train at home in my spare time for the career I have chosen. No obligation. No salesman will visit me. CHECK ONE BOX ONLY!

ASSOCIATE in SPECIALIZED BUSINESS DEGREE PROGRAMS
- Business Management
- Accounting
- Bus. Mgmt.—Finance option
- Bus. Mgmt.—Marketing option
- Apparel Computer Science
- Hospitality Management

ASSOCIATE in SPECIALIZED TECHNOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAMS
- Mechanical Engineering Technology
- Civil Engineering Technology
- Electrical Engineering Technology
- Industrial Engineering Technology
- Electronics Technology

CAREER DIPLOMA PROGRAMS
- Computer Programming
- Computer Programming (COBOL)
- Personal Computer Specialist
- Computer Assisted Bookkeeping
- PC Repair
- Desktop Publishing & Design
- High School
- Catering/Gourmet Cooking
- Medical/Dental Office Asst.
- Auto Mechanics
- Bookkeeping
- Hotel/Restaurant Mgmt.
- Drafting
- Animal Care Specialist
- Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
- Electronics
- Secretarial
- Electrician
- Police Sciences
- Private Security Officer
- Art
- Small Business Mgmt.
- Interior Decorating
- Wildlife/Forestry Conservation
- Legal Secretary
- Gun Mechanics
- Fitness & Nutrition
- Locksmithing
- Motorcycle Repair
- Surveying & Mapping
- TV/VCR Repair
- Child Day Care
- Legal Assistant
- Photography
- Journalism/Short Story Writing
- Florist
- Teacher Aide
- Home Inspector
- Real Estate Appraiser
- Medical Transcriptionist

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____ Apt. # _____
City/State _____ Zip _____
Phone ( ) _____

5 WAYS TO GET THE JOB YOU REALLY WANT
In 6 Months or Less!

Prepare at home in spare time. We train you step by step for these career positions. (Check One)

- ☐ BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTANT
- ☐ LEGAL SECRETARY
- ☐ MEDICAL SECRETARY
- ☐ DENTAL ASSISTANT
- ☐ MEDICAL ASSISTANT

All courses are approved and nationally accredited. The U.S. Dept. of Labor places these in the top "Careers of the Future". We show you how to get the job you want with our proven home study methods. Prepare for your future NOW! For FREE Facts call (602)994-3488 or write TODAY!

"30,000 Students Since 1977"

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City/State/Zip _____

THE LAUREL SCHOOL Dept. CHAP3
2533 E 6th St - PO Box 5000 - Phoenix AZ 85010

ENROLL NOW — GET UP TO 50% OFF!

YOU TRAIN AT HOME

Master the skills you need with NEI Personal service. Low tuition.

- ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ C Programming
- ☐ QBasic Programming
- ☐ PC Servicing

CALL TODAY!
1-800-552-0782

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

NEI Dept. 7013-0360
7929 Western Place Washington, DC 20016

All successful home study advertisers use some kind of ad code to track the effectiveness of an ad. Note how several different schools, in different publications all use ad codes. Can you identify them?

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Figure 1 continued

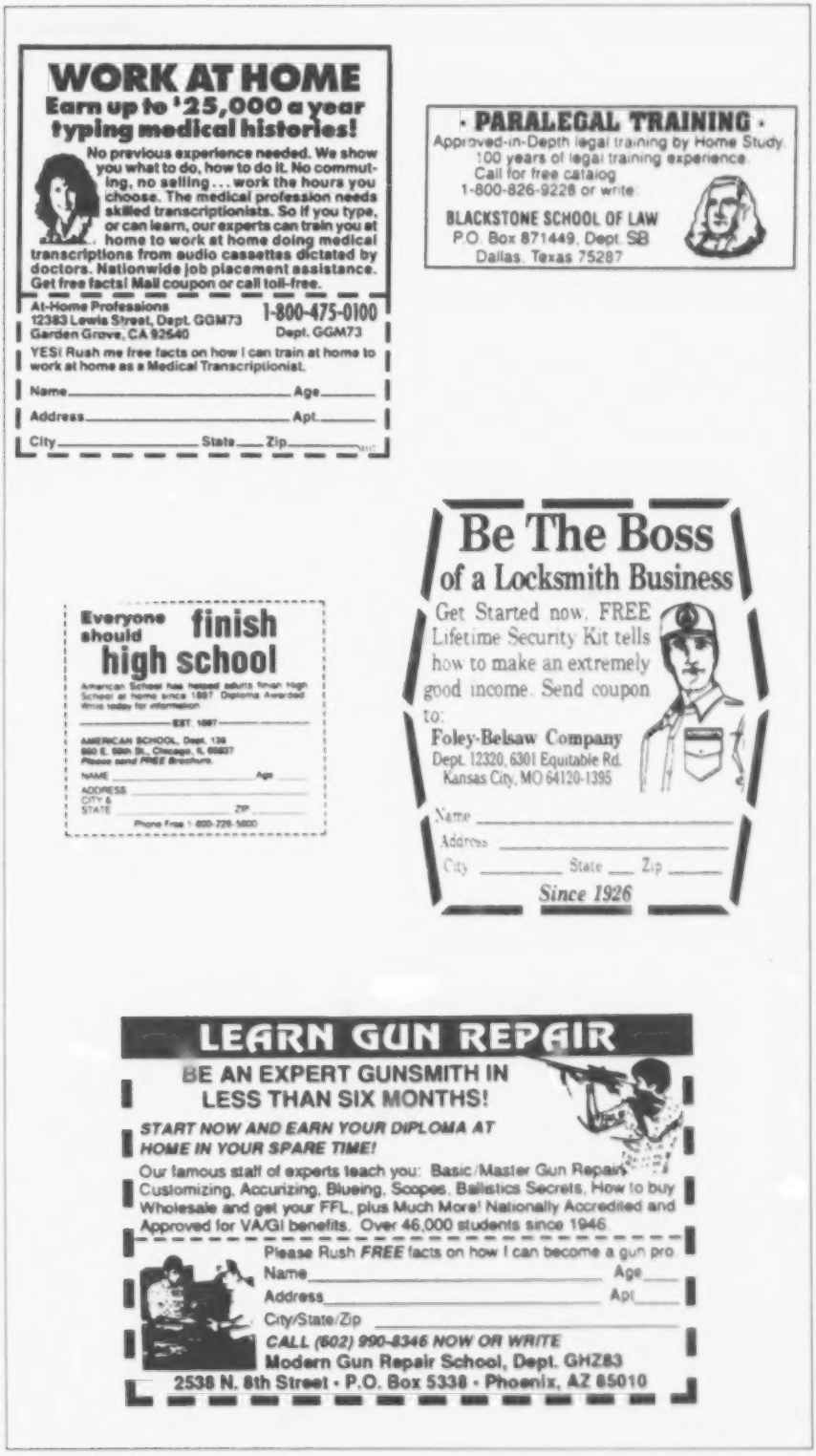
WORK AT HOME
Earn up to $25,000 a year typing medical histories!
No previous experience needed. We show you what to do, how to do it. No commuting, no selling... work the hours you choose. The medical profession needs skilled transcriptionists. So if you type, or can learn, our experts can train you at home to work at home doing medical transcriptions from audio cassettes dictated by doctors. Nationwide job placement assistance. Get free facts! Mail coupon or call toll-free.
At-Home Professions
12383 Lewis Street, Dept. GGM73
Garden Grove, CA 92640
1-800-475-0100
Dept. GGM73
YES! Rush me free facts on how I can train at home to work at home as a Medical Transcriptionist.
Name Age
Address Apt.
City State Zip
PARALEGAL TRAINING
Approved-in-Depth legal training by Home Study
100 years of legal training experience.
Call for free catalog
1-800-826-9228 or write:
BLACKSTONE SCHOOL OF LAW
P.O. Box 871449, Dept. SB
Dallas, Texas 75287
Be The Boss
of a Locksmith Business
Get Started now. FREE Lifetime Security Kit tells how to make an extremely good income. Send coupon to:
Foley-Belsaw Company
Dept. 12320, 6301 Equitable Rd.
Kansas City, MO 64120-1395
Name
Address
City State Zip
Since 1926
Everyone should finish high school
American School has helped adults finish High School at home since 1897. Diploma Awarded. Write today for information.
EST. 1897
AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. 136
850 E. 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637
Please send FREE Brochure.
NAME Age
ADDRESS
CITY & STATE ZIP
Phone Free 1-800-228-5600
LEARN GUN REPAIR
BE AN EXPERT GUNSMITH IN LESS THAN SIX MONTHS!
START NOW AND EARN YOUR DIPLOMA AT HOME IN YOUR SPARE TIME!
Our famous staff of experts teach you: Basic/Master Gun Repair, Customizing, Accurizing, Bluing, Scopes, Ballistics Secrets, How to buy Wholesale and get your FFL, plus Much More! Nationally Accredited and Approved for VA/GI benefits. Over 46,000 students since 1946.
Please Rush FREE facts on how I can become a gun pro.
Name Age
Address Apt.
City/State/Zip
CALL (602) 990-8346 NOW OR WRITE
Modern Gun Repair School, Dept. GHZ83
2538 N. 8th Street • P.O. Box 5338 • Phoenix, AZ 85010

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Figure 2

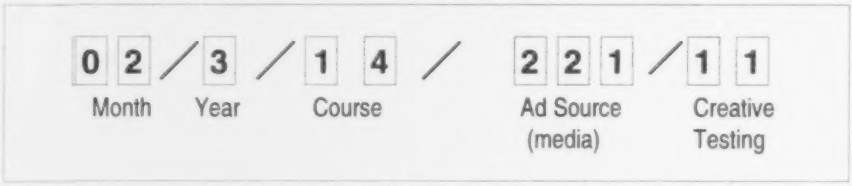
SEND CARD TODAY FOR FREE NRI CATALOG!
NRI Schools
McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center
4401 Connecticut Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20008
For career courses approved under GI Bill, check for details
✓Check one free catalog only
Microcomputer Servicing
TV/Video/Audio Servicing
Industrial Electronics & Robotic
Basic Electronics
Computer-Aided Drafting
Computer Programming
Desktop Publishing & Design
PC Applications Specialist
Programming in C++ with Windows
Name (please print) Age
Address
City State Zip
Accredited Member, National Home Study Council
100-0893
Mail this card for Complete Details... FREE!
No stamp necessary—we pay postage
YES! I am interested in learning more about making money part time or full time helping fill out income tax forms. Please send me FREE INFORMATION by return mail on FTS's self-training program on tax preparation. I understand I am under no obligation and no salesman will ever phone or call on me. Send me complete FREE INFORMATION AT ONCE.
AT 7
Please Check
Mr.
Mrs.
Miss
Ms.
PRINT NAME
PRINT ADDRESS
PRINT CITY, STATE & ZIP
Everything by mail—No salesman will call
JMS 04/92
FTS
Federated Tax Service
Administration and Service Center
2021 W. Montrose Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60618

With a business reply postcard or self-sticking return envelope, the ad code is often pre-printed on the card. Note the examples above. Which have ad codes?

The most important variables in an ad code are season (month/year), course name (title of the class being advertised), ad source (media used, placement, size of ad), and creative testing (new creative ad ideas, different sizes, different copy points, unusual headlines, etc.).

The example below shows a sample of a basic ad code. Note that there is a space for the season, the year, the course name (if your

school offers multiple courses), media used and creative testing. From this example, the ad code tells us that this advertisement is for The School of Secretarial Training, running in the February, 1993 issue of *Woman* magazine, and it's a full-page display ad test.



Time: This lets you track the season, time of year, time of month, or the shelf life of a specific ad or magazine.

Course ID: If your school offers multiple courses, the name of the course or school is absolutely essential in an ad code. If someone calls in on an ad, the ad code helps direct the call to the right operator. Course ID also lets you study which course titles drew a better response. It may even affect your media choices, as you see which courses are appealing to your target market.

Media ID: The source of your ad lead is crucial to measuring the cost effectiveness of your advertising media choices. *Glamour, Star, Shape, GQ,* whatever—there must be an identifiable way to log in the name of the medium. The example here leaves spaces to be even more specific, like size of ad, placement (classifieds or ROP), issue number, and so on.

Creative Testing: When you want to try something new such as a copy test, new layout, or headline test, you can test the **creative effectiveness** using this code and a "control group."

Making the Data Work: How to Analyze Your Advertising

Once you've gotten the ad code information, now what? This is when we come to the heart of the matter—organizing the data you've collected from the ad codes and interpreting the results.

Direct marketing has been around for nearly one hundred years. And because of the nature of direct marketing, it has always been possible to measure advertising results down to the dollar. Thirty years ago, the "progressive home study marketers" were testing variables and doing all their calculations by hand.

Today, personal computers make it possible to measure every kind of variable and determine exactly their effect on sales. The computer offers us advantages in data collection that allow us to have the information we need immediately—at the touch of a button. It also allows us, as home study marketers, to analyze many different aspects of our advertising, our customers and our media in a fraction of the time.

Obviously, computers enable us to get very sophisticated with data analysis. However, the example on page 82 (Figure 3) is a very basic one. The method shown here is simple enough to compute by hand.

There are four categories of basic data which must be gathered to conduct a true campaign analysis. The first, "cost," is the amount of money the ad cost for media space. The second, "number of inquiries," tells exactly how many people responded from the ad in question. The third, "enrollments," is the total number of people who enrolled in the course. And the fourth, "total revenue," is the amount of money in tuition received from a particular piece of advertising.

With this basic information, one can determine how much each inquiry cost the school, how many inquiries turned into enrollments, the conversion percentage (the percentage of inquiries that converted to enrollments), and how much money was made (or lost) from a certain ad campaign.

"Publication code, 221," also denotes the source as *Woman* magazine. "Course" is The School of Secretarial Training. "Type" is a creative code that tells us what kind of ad it is. "Size, DTH," tells us it's a one-third page display ad. "Cost" is the cost to run the ad for the month. "Inquiries" is the number of people who responded to the ad. "Cost per inquiry" is how much it cost to get each person to call or write. "Sales" is a measure of how much money was collected to date for the course. "Enrollments" are how many inquiries actually turned into enrollments. "Enrollment percent" is the conversion percentage or the percentage of enrollments per inquiry. "Cost per enrollment" is the average dollar amount it took to enroll people with this ad. "Total revenue" is the total amount of tuition monies received. "Revenue dollars per ad dollar" is a ratio of ad dollars as related to media costs.

Figure 3

AD CODE	DESCRIPTION	PUB	TYPE	SIZE	COST	# OF INQUIRIES	COST PER INQUIRY	# OF SALES	% ENROLLED	COST PER ENROLLMENT	TOTAL REVENUE	REVENUE DOLLARS PER AD DOLLAR
01314221	WOMAN	221	D14	DTH	750.25	178	4.22	26	14.61	28.86	8327	11.10
02314221	WOMAN	221	D14	DTH	750.25	192	3.91	24	12.50	31.26	7672	10.23
0331422111	WOMAN	221	D21	DFP	1050.00	210	5.00	33	15.86	31.82	9933	9.46
0331422112	WOMAN	221	D22	DFP	1050.00	164	6.40	21	12.81	50.00	6048	5.76
					2100.00	374	5.62	54	14.44	38.89	15981	7.61
04314221	WOMAN	221	D62	DSI	380.00	88	4.32	10	11.36	38.00	2887	7.60
05314221	WOMAN	221	D15	ATH	750.25	162	4.63	21	12.96	35.73	5671	7.56
06314221	WOMAN	221	D14	DTH	750.25	156	4.81	19	12.18	39.49	4929	6.57
07314221	WOMAN	221	D62	DSI	380.00	76	5.00	9	11.84	42.22	2158	5.68
08314221	WOMAN	221	D62	DSI	380.00	71	5.35	8	11.27	47.50	1742	4.58
09314221	WOMAN	221	D15	DTH	750.25	162	4.63	20	12.35	37.51	4205	5.61
1031422111	WOMAN	221	D23	DFP	1050.00	232	4.53	32	13.79	32.81	6442	6.14
1031422112	WOMAN	221	D24	DFP	1050.00	196	5.36	28	14.29	37.50	5741	5.47
					2100.00	428	4.91	60	14.02	35.00	12183	5.80
11314221	WOMAN	221	D16	DTH	750.25	136	5.52	17	12.50	44.13	3235	4.31
12314221	WOMAN	221	D63	DSI	380.00	68	5.59	10	14.71	38.00	1740	4.58
TOTAl 1993	WOMAN ADS				10221.50	2091	4.89	278	13.30	36.77	70730	6.92

This is a sample Advertising Analysis for a fictitious course called "Secretary." The ad code on the side shows us that this is a report for the year of '93 in the publication "Woman."

Creative Codes

Note the third and forth entries under Ad Codes: 0331422111 and 0331422112 in Figure 3, there are an extra two numbers on the end. This is one way to mark and identify a creative test. This creative test is what we call an A/B split. For example, the ad "A" may be the standard ad which runs most of the time. The test, "B," has a bold new headline and different copy strategy. Both full page ads ran in *Woman* magazine, during the month of March. Inside every other issue, the test "B" appeared and all others contained the standard "A" ad.

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Computing the Facts

The most effective way to compile this information is to put it all together on a computer. If you already have a PC, there are several off-the-shelf direct marketing tracking software programs developed to test the effectiveness of your advertising. But before you purchase one, be certain you know what you're buying. These ready-made tracking programs can be quite costly and may not fit the criteria of the home study direct marketer. They are often sales-force-oriented or designed for catalogue houses, so they contain features that you will not need or ever use. And, as is often the case, these programs may lack the specific features you need.

One way around the "software problem" is to hire a programmer to customize your own software program and design a database program that suits your school's specific needs. That way, you can start out with a program that's relatively simple and basic and later expand with more sophisticated capabilities as your business progresses.

A competent programmer can install a basic program in less than two weeks. Some schools hire an in-house computer programmer. Others retain a free-lance consultant to work in the office part-time or on an as-needed basis. Either way, a tailor-made database program that's unique to your school and your needs will work the best in the long run.

When the program is in place, there are many ways you can work with the data. You can output a "Stacking Report" which can analyze each variable and lets you see each one in descending order of profitability. This also enables you to cross-reference a number of different categories. It tells you facts on items in order of highest-to-lowest, so you can do a stack on a number of items: revenue, inquiries, enrollments, publication effectiveness, costs, response time, and much more.

But be careful. An item can rank the highest in one category, and the lowest on another. For example, if you did a stacking report on "Lead Analysis by Publication," *Soap Opera Digest* may have the number one spot. In the same study, however, it is quite possible that in a report on "Revenue Analysis by Publication," *Soap Opera Digest* ends up on the bottom, because many of those initial inquirers did not enroll in the course.

Other Variables that Influence Advertising Decisions

Aside from the examples mentioned in the previous section, here are some other advertising analysis reports that we have found helpful. There are thousands of different variable combinations that are possible for testing. Keep in mind that these are our suggestions only—there are thousands of other variables and combinations you may want to analyze with this method.

- **Size**: This report can determine ad size effectiveness by totalling all the money spent on media buys and seeing which sized ads were most effective. This can be accomplished by pulling up the conversion percentages and the revenue per ad dollar figures.

- **Type**: This report expands on the size analysis, by testing the same size ads, using different creative approaches, different headlines, words, photos, type, etc.

- **Response Time Analysis:** This report is designed to track the monthly flow of leads and enrollments by course. Over time, you can predict the time frame of lead and enrollment flow. For example, several of our ads ran during the magazine cover month of June: we had a few inquiries in May, our heaviest in June, a progressive decline in July and August, and so forth.

- **Campaign Code Evaluation**: You can analyze a mailing program by recording the number of pieces sent and the effectiveness of each mailing package. For example, a five-part direct mail campaign code evaluation may reveal that the second and third mailings in a series had the highest enrollments.

- **Old Lead Evaluation**: This tracking lets you see, by time period, how many months or years you can use your lead list and still be profitable. For example, if a regular five-part mailing series took six months to complete, is it still cost effective to send a prospective student a sixth letter after a year and a half? This test will show you.

- **Collection Analysis**: This can track a month's enrollments for one course from down-payment to conclusion. Month-to-month comparisons can give you insights into realization and trends. For example, for month "A" you have the total contract

amount and the monies received, the amount owed, active accounts, how many completed their payments, and how many dropped out.

- **Realization Rate by Quality of Student**: This report can track the relationship between grade point average (GPA) and tuition collected. For example, a student in the A, B, or even C range is more likely to pay on time than a D or failing student.

Testing the Right Things

Many direct marketers are excellent at collecting data, but fail to test the right things or do not understand the meaning of the information they have. As often as not, reports are generated and misunderstood, apples are compared to oranges and a good campaign is trashed.

The **six major categories** that can and should be tested on a regular basis are:

1. The course(s) you offer: features, differences from the competition, marketplace need.
2. The media used: publications, direct mail, broadcast, supermarket take-ones, deck cards, etc.
3. The propositions you offer: course materials, tutition, terms, competitive pricing, textbooks, etc.
4. The copy platforms you use: what's your appeal—money, status, self image, benefits, testimonials? Which work best?
5. The formats you use: size, photos, color, etc.
6. The timing: season, year, economic conditions.

Taking Action: How to Make Smart Decisions

Information is important. And in direct response, there is no shortage of that. We have the advantage of an easy-to-measure medium. Very few forms of advertising let you know to the exact penny what your advertising accomplished. But information not gathered or not interpreted correctly is meaningless.

A little information can be helpful, but it can also be dangerous. Here's a word of caution: avoid quick-fix adjustments. Don't make snap judgments about a campaign's success or failure by looking at cost-per-inquiry, response percentages, or revenue alone. These are interim measurements that provide important information. But when used alone or examined out of context, they often portray the results inaccurately.

Why Information is Misunderstood

Often, novice direct marketers will misread the results of their advertising. That's because some ads pull in a very high number of inquiries, but over time, few enrollments. And some ads pull fewer inquiries, but those leads may be higher quality, (people who pay up front, in full and enroll right away). And finally, of course, the long-term bottom line of any home study advertising is realization: how much tuition income is actually generated.

There are two things to keep in mind when studying your new data from an advertising analysis. First, don't jump to conclusions, (unless of course, you have no leads at all, then there is definitely a problem). And second, wait a while before making a major decision. Some studies may take several months—or even up to a year or two—to be accurate.

A number of factors can make a difference. If the "quality" of people inquiring are poor, than your school loses money having these people on the mailing list. Seasonality is also something to consider; what time of year was it when the ad was first seen, how long did it take the prospect to receive the information, how many follow-up contacts (telemarketing and direct mail) were made?

Conclusion

With tracking and testing, we can verify what people buy, what they respond to, and when—and determine whether our own guesswork is on target or needs adjustment. The reports reviewed here are only a small part of the entire picture. There are many other ways to analyze your advertising effectiveness or the variables that influence people. Keep in mind that attitudes and people change over time, so what influences their decisions will change as well. Tracking and testing is a never-ending process, which is one of the things that makes home study marketing dynamic and exciting.

Chapter Seven

Creating a Winning Home Study Ad

by
Erick Scheiderman
Director of Publications
California College for Health Sciences

The Author

Erick Scheiderman is Director of Publications for California College for Health Sciences (CCHS) in San Diego, CA. In his two years working in home study education he has gained much understanding in writing and designing promotional materials, such as brochures, advertisements and catalogs.

Introduction

Every home study school has its own philosophy, mission and personality, and your ads should reflect those things that make your school so special. In this chapter, I am going to show you how we do it at California College for Health Sciences (CCHS). What works for us might be different from what you believe works for you, but you may be able to use some of our ideas. In the end, it is your school and your ad!

This chapter sets forth our thoughts and suggestions, our own personal style. I am not suggesting to you what is right or wrong; instead, I am sharing with you what works for me from my past experience. Although you may not agree with some of our suggestions, keep in mind that we all have different writing styles. Also, remember that your creativity is what makes your school unique.

The Direct Response Ad

The most popular style of advertising used by home study schools is the direct response advertisement. The ultimate purpose of your ad is to inform or persuade your audience of the quality and value of a service and to create a reply or request for more information, also known as a direct response. The bottom line is to get a name and address.

First, you introduce the service, arouse interest, and then ask the prospective student to contact you for more information, usually by way of a coupon or an 800 number. The second step is fulfillment of information in a catalog or brochure to the prospective student in order to close the sale. This should always be followed up by additional contacts by telephone or print until a contract is sold or the lead is abandoned. When to abandon a lead is for you to determine. At CCHS, we follow up each lead at least three times.

What Makes a Good Ad?

To put together an effective advertisement, you must first analyze your service, your offer, the type of consumer you want the ad to appeal to and the image that you want to portray for your school.

Evaluate Other Ads

As part of my training at CCHS I was told over and over to learn what our competitors are doing. Thinking that CCHS is unique and is one of the few correspondence schools that trains allied health professionals, I assumed that we had no competition. But, I was told in no uncertain terms, "everybody is a competitor—sooner or later."

I went to a large newsstand and looked at the advertisements in as many magazines as I could before I was asked to leave. Then I bought as many magazines as I could afford. I learned quickly by examining each ad, the style, the headline, the graphics, the copy and the format used. I looked at various magazines and saw the type of products sold. I learned that if you are training people to work in child care, you may want to research *Parenting Magazine.*

You should get into the habit of collecting all kinds of ads. Study them, study them and study them some more! Watch these maga-

zines monthly. You can go to your local library, pull back issues and check the ads. If the same ad continues to appear, it generally means that that particular ad was effective. Remember, the best market and advertising research has already been done by your competitors years ago.

How long have The American School, International Correspondence School and NRI been in business? Learn from them, read their advertisements and everyone else's. Use the ideas in these ads if you believe they are worthwhile. Don't re-invent the wheel!

1. **Use riveting headers.** Your ad competes with many others. Make your ad stand out. If the header does not grab them, the pitch can be great, the service and price could be unbeatable but people are not going to find out. Make sure your headline gets read. Here are some samples of effective headers:

   - *"Be a Medical Transcriptionist"*
   - *"Learn Flight Navigation"*
   - *"Become a Paralegal in Just Six Months"*
   - *"In Just Six Short Months You Can be a Television Repairman"*
   - *"Advance Your Career & Earn Your Degree"*
   - *"Upgrade Your Skills While Earning An Associate Degree"*

The purpose of your header is to identify your audience and get its attention. Your offer is of interest to certain people only; create a header that will get to those special people. Your header must grab your reader's interest and stimulate further reading. Avoid tricky headers!

2. **Ad Copy.** Here are some suggestions to follow when writing copy for your ad:

To get the reader's attention you must use creative copy. **Do not use fancy words** or "puffspeak" that will confuse your audience. Use plain English. Be straightforward. Keep your ad copy at the seventh or eighth grade reading level and don't lose your audience.

You want to **make your ad copy short and concise.** Too much ad copy and your audience might get lost in the text. No word salad!

It is critically important to state your offer right up front so your audience does not have to read through the entire ad. **Use catchy words** that trigger an emotional response, such as "new," "free," "how to" and "discover." You will find these words in most successful ads.

A wonderful resource for creative copywriting is a book entitled *Words That Sell,* published by Contemporary Books, Inc. This book is a treasure chest of effective promotional copy. For instance, did you know there are over 50 different words or phrases that mean the word "big" or "many?" All of these can be found in this text. It is a must for anyone who is involved with copywriting. I use it all the time.

What Sells in Ad Copy?

Only **you** know what sells best for your school, but chances are your successes will be centered on **perceived benefits.**

Your readers are asking themselves, "What's in it for me?" Benefits, benefits and benefits! Don't waste expensive ad space explaining the virtues of your program or school. It won't work.

Your prospective students want to know what's in it for them. Tell them! Here are some common benefits to use in home study ads:

- Earn your college degree
- No on-campus requirements
- Study at home . . . in your spare time
- Get that promotion!
- Study at your own pace
- Everything you need is included
- Step-by-step instruction
- Affordable

3. Use of testimonials from satisfied graduates is always a great tool. In order to ease your prospect's resistance, you might try using testimonials. When using testimonials, be sure to include the person's full name, the name of his or her city and state and his or

her credentials. A picture can also help. This adds credibility to the source of your testimonials. Also, remember to keep a record of the original document to back up your claim. Be sure to get permission to print the testimonial.

Here are some samples of testimonials:

"It was really convenient to work and go to school by studying at home—CCHS has too much to offer for someone to turn down!"

Wanda Robb, RRT—Florence, SC

"CCHS has provided us with a structured, methodical means for offering our students the best of academic training!"

Paula Channel, CRTT, CPFT—Joplin, MO

4. Use artwork and other graphics. When you look at a page of advertisements, your eye quickly focuses on a photo or an illustration.

Use of illustrations and photos bring more attention to your ads. I always try to use an illustration or a photograph. Be careful to be "politically correct."

When using photographs or illustrations, remember to balance them so that your ads are culturally representative of your audience. Use photos of men and women from **all** walks of life.

5. Whistles and bells. When designing your winning ad, remember that you have to compete with every advertisement on the page. With desktop publishing, we have access to thousands of different type sizes and styles to make our advertisements stand out. When choosing font sizes, make sure they are easy to read. In some ads, the copy is so small that it is really difficult to read. Make your fonts pleasing to the eye.

The use of bold and italics can be used to stress or emphasize specific words or phrases that are important to your advertisement.

The use of borders can separate your ad from others. Placing bullets or stars in front of the benefits you offer will make them stand out.

People tend to associate companies by their logo, or trademark.

Use your corporate logo, and use the NHSC logo to add credibility to your school.

6. Key every ad you place. Advertising is very expensive. You must know if it is producing income for your school. It is easy to tell where your leads and conversions are coming from with an ad key. Additionally, you will need to test your ads' effectiveness and continue to revise and test your ads to get the highest returns. The code will tell you which ad, from which publication, and when the publication hit the newsstands.

For example, let's say you placed an ad in the November 1993 issue of *Ladies Home Journal*. A good key would be LHJ 11/93. This is one of the most important elements of every ad that you design.

7. The response coupon and an 800 number. Your targeted audience has read your offer and wants to learn more. They either return the coupon attached to the ad or they call the toll-free number for more information. You must make responding to your offer simple and convenient. If people are confused by your offer they may ignore it or forget about it.

No one should loose prospective students because they cannot conveniently contact the school. Make it easy for people to respond to your offer. Here is a simple yet effective response coupon:

☐ YES! Rush me **FREE** Information Today!
Name _____
Address _____ Apt# _____
City _____ State ___ Zip _____
Phone (_____) _____
Self-employed: Yes ☐ No ☐
Education: HS ☐ College 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐
Return to CCHS • 222 W. 24th St., National City, CA 91950

Notice that the offer is repeated; the word "FREE" is on the response coupon. And there is plenty of room for the prospect's name and address. Being straightforward makes it easy to respond to the offer.

Response coupons are an excellent tool for qualifying your leads. Depending on the type of programs your school offers, you need to know your lead.

How much follow-up do you give each lead? Only testing will tell but, in response coupon on page 92, you can tell if the lead is a high school graduate (a requirement for our programs), if that lead is employed and where he or she lives (rents an apartment or maybe is a homeowner).

There are many ways you can collect data on response coupons. The type will vary with each school. Go to a newsstand, read the ads, and learn from the pros. Also, note that the ad key is placed on the reply coupon making it easy to track the response. When prospective students use your 800 number for information, have your operators ask them how they heard about your school and in what publication they saw the advertisement.

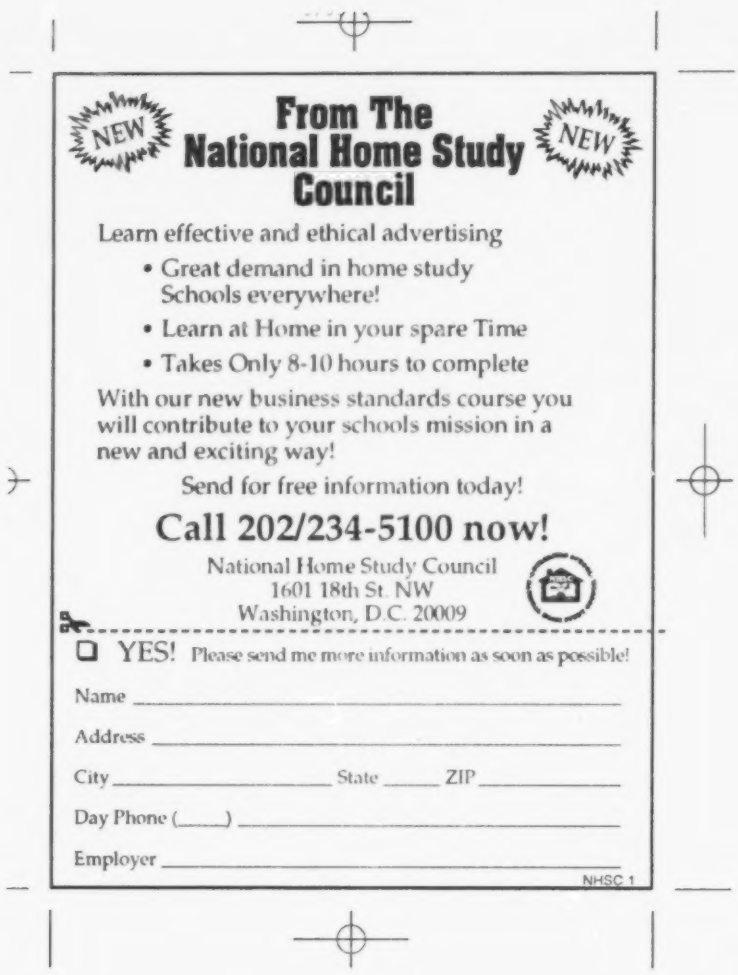
8. The Close. Readers of your ad will best remember the header or "grabber" and the close. The close is as important if not more so than the grabber. At our school we believe that "students will not enroll if we do not ask them to!"

Here are some typical closings:

- *"YES! Rush me FREE facts Today!"*
- *"YES! I want to enroll Today!"*
- *"Call Toll-free 800-221-7374 NOW!"*

Notice how in the above closings we not only tell the reader **what** to do, but also **when** to do it. Read your favorite magazine. Turn to the classifieds and check out the close of all the different ads, not just school ads. They should all have a close, and they should all have the same basic elements.

9. National Home Study Council's Business Standards. No advertisement should be developed without a thorough review of the *NHSC Business Standards*. They direct, perscriptively, accredited schools to be honest and straightforward in their promotional activities. Our ads must be truthful. Now, let's look at an advertisement for the NHSC Business Standards Course:



NEW

From The National Home Study Council

NEW

Learn effective and ethical advertising

- Great demand in home study Schools everywhere!
- Learn at Home in your spare Time
- Takes Only 8-10 hours to complete

With our new business standards course you will contribute to your schools mission in a new and exciting way!

Send for free information today!

Call 202/234-5100 now!

National Home Study Council
1601 18th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

☐ YES! Please send me more information as soon as possible!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

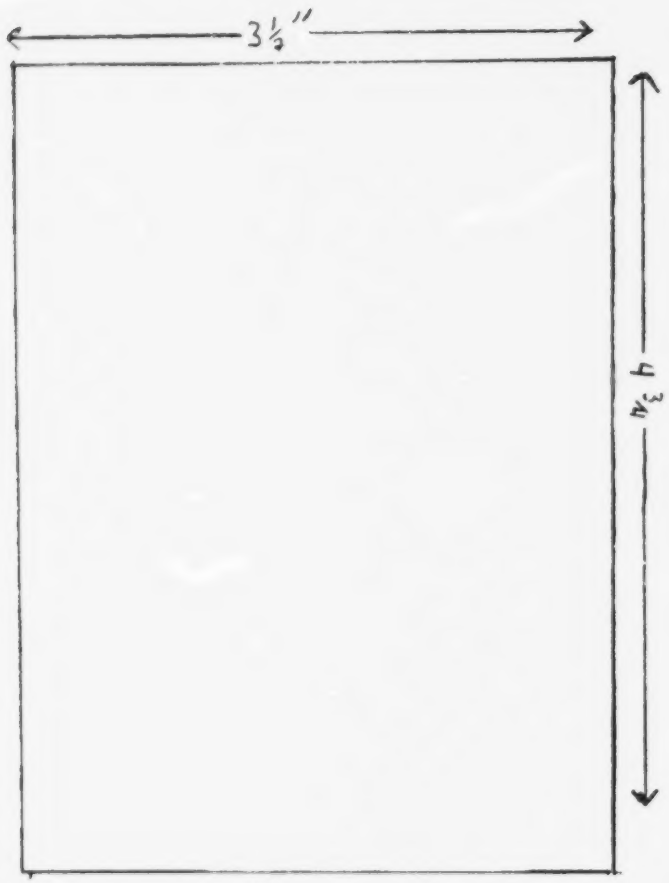
Day Phone (____) _____

Employer _____

NHSC 1

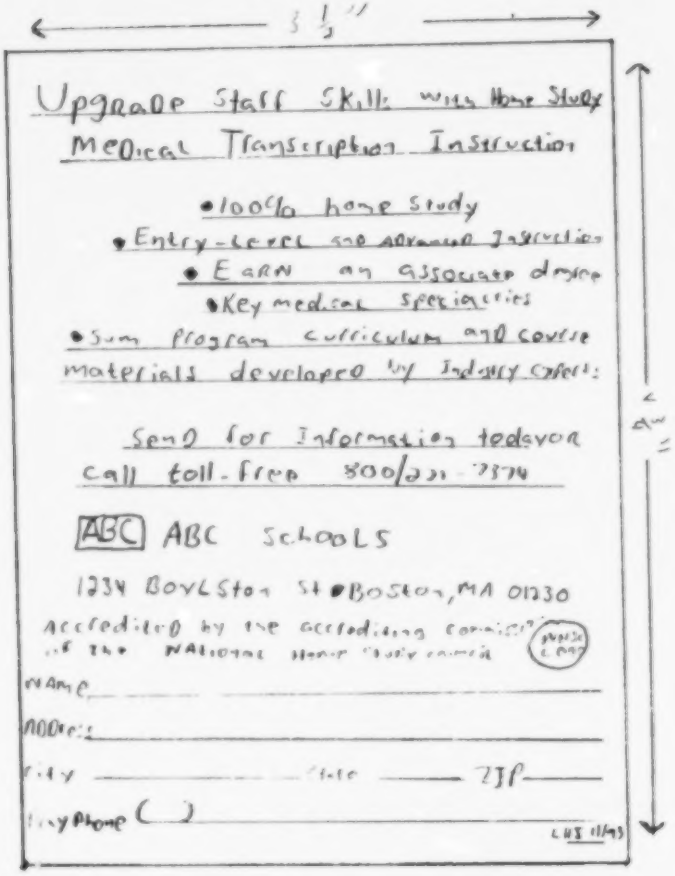
The ad must have give the full name and location of the school and the state and city where the school headquarters is located. Each staff member responsible for marketing and advertising should be a graduate of the NHSC Business Standards Course. Do you recognize the basic elements involved in producing an effective direct response advertisement? In the next few pages we will show you step-by-step how to produce your ad, from the very beginning to the end.

To write an ad all you need is a pencil or pen, a ruler, word processor, a photocopy machine, some idea of how you want your ad to look like, and some creativity. First, sketch out the size of the ad as shown below:



Second, mark out where you want your photograph, illustration, copy, response coupon and any other information or graphics you wish to include in your ad as shown on page 96.

Now that you have a rough composite drawing of your ad, you'll have some idea as to what your ad will look like when complete. Now, take your composite and copy to the graphic artist.

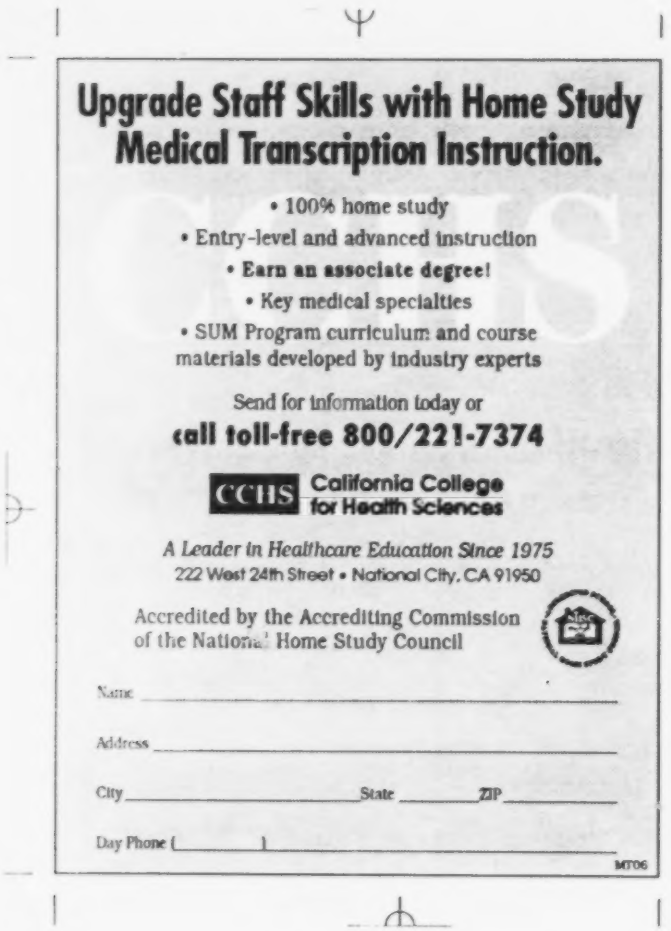


He or she will then transfer your raw composite onto a Macintosh or PC desktop publishing system and make it into the actual ad as shown for you on page 97.

In this advertisement we have used all the basic elements of a winning home study ad. The ad is clean and easy to read. The copy is large enough to read without straining, and it is not too busy. We have included the logo of the company and of the NHSC, to add name recognition and credibility to the school.

We have used bullets to show the reader the benefits of our course. The headline is large and in bold type, enabling the ad to stand out. There is plenty of room on the reply coupon. And, we have our key on the lower right corner to help us track results. What other elements would you include? Is this the best we can do? When you see your ad next to others you should always ask this question.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Upgrade Staff Skills with Home Study Medical Transcription Instruction.

- 100% home study
- Entry-level and advanced instruction
- **Earn an associate degree!**
- Key medical specialties
- SUM Program curriculum and course materials developed by industry experts

Send for information today or

call toll-free 800/221-7374

CCHS California College for Health Sciences

A Leader in Healthcare Education Since 1975

222 West 24th Street • National City, CA 91950

Accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Day Phone (_____) _____

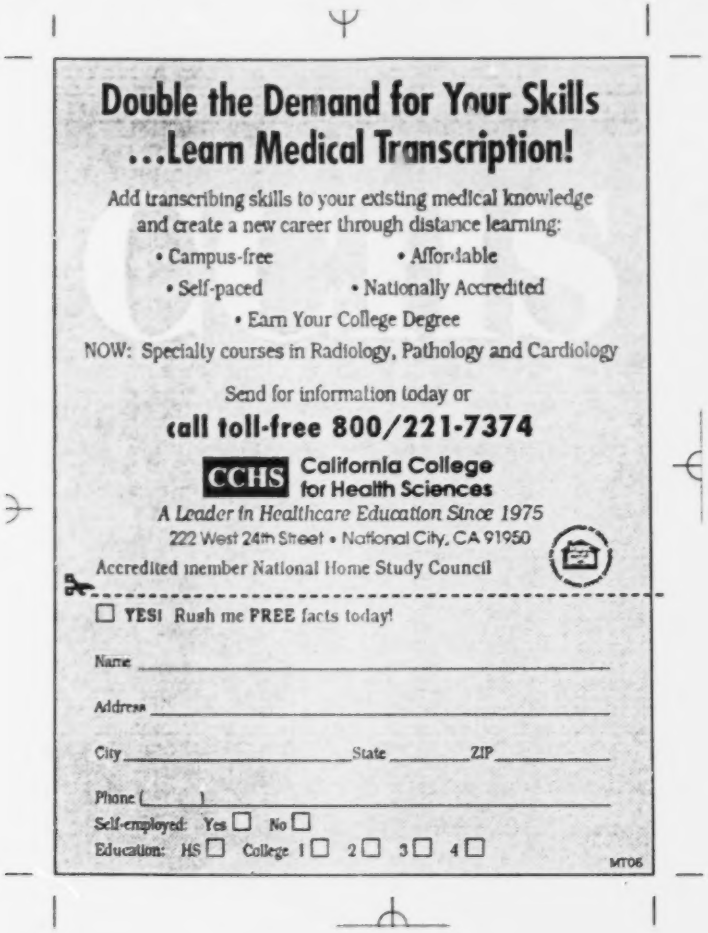
MT06

When we brought this ad to Kenneth Scheiderman, President of CCHS, he thought we could have done better. Here are some of the friendly suggestions from our President: "The ad was boring;" "the ad needed a better header;" "the ad also did not emphasize the benefits;" instead, it talks about the curriculum," "and most importantly, the ad has no closing; it does not tell the reader what to do and when."

After we looked and compared ads from other schools, we rewrote the ad and edited it. The point in all ad writing is to look at

it, edit it, look at it, and edit it, then do it all over again. After we were happy we sent it to the President and he edited it some more.

Here is the same ad but written differently. We'll change it again and again. We probably should!



Double the Demand for Your Skills
...Learn Medical Transcription!

Add transcribing skills to your existing medical knowledge and create a new career through distance learning:

- Campus-free
- Affordable
- Self-paced
- Nationally Accredited
- Earn Your College Degree

NOW: Specialty courses in Radiology, Pathology and Cardiology

Send for information today or

call toll-free 800/221-7374

CCHS California College for Health Sciences

A Leader in Healthcare Education Since 1975

222 West 24th Street • National City, CA 91950

Accredited member National Home Study Council

☐ YES! Rush me FREE facts today!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (___) _____

Self-employed: Yes ☐ No ☐

Education: HS ☐ College 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

MT06

Conclusion

Advertising is fun! It lets you bring out your artistic abilities that you never knew you had. When sitting down to design your ad remember these basic elements of good advertising, and you should not run into any problems. And, most importantly have fun and be creative!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Chapter Eight

Working with Media Sales Representatives

by
Jim Valentine
Director, Media Marketing
NRI Schools

The Author

Jim has been the Director of Media Marketing for NRI Schools in Washington, D.C. since 1985. He manages all aspects of media placement for NRI's in-house agency (Washington Marketing Associates), including media selection, analysis, and pricing negotiations. Jim has developed and implemented a fully computerized media planning capability to manager NRI's multimillion dollar advertising budget.

Jim has a BS degree from West Chester State University in Pennsylvania. Jim is certified in production and inventory management (CPIM) by the American Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS). He served for five years as a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Montgomery (PA) chapter of the APICS and is currently a member of the Direct Marketing Association. Prior to relocating to Washington, D.C. to join NRI, Jim was Director of Operations for Instruction/McGraw-Hill in Paoli, Pennsylvania.

Introduction

Advertising media sales representatives are **one of the most valuable and under-used resources** available to advertisers today. The rep's salary and travel expenses are paid for by the publications they represent, so they may be able to visit your school at no cost to you. Media reps are a liaison between the substantial reference and research departments of many magazines and your school. Advertisers who truly make an effort to work with media

representatives are often rewarded with significantly increased results from their advertising investment.

If you're currently running an advertising campaign, you have probably been contacted by numerous reps who have seen your ad in another publication and would like to introduce you to their magazine. If you are not currently advertising, you may need to make the initial contact with a media rep. Most magazines include a list of their advertising account representatives in the front of the magazine, near the table of contents pages. Another source is the SRDS *Consumer Magazine Rates and Data Guide*. This is available through subscription (telephone: 708-574-6000) and is also available in most libraries in the business section. The SRDS *Guide* contains complete information on all consumer magazines, including publication description, advertising representative, information, rates, circulation, etc.

When you contact the representative of the magazine you're interested in, be sure to request a media kit. This is important even if the rep wants to schedule a visit with you in the near future. It's handy to have the media kit so that you can make better use of your time when a visit from the rep is scheduled.

The next step in dealing with a media sales rep is to pre-qualify both the publication they represent and the school you represent. You need to be sure the rep understands the type of prospect you are eager to attract-male or female, approximate age, education level, and interests. It would be a waste of both your time and the media rep's time to discuss a publication that does not attract readers who would have any interest in your courses.

Resources Available

One of the most valuable resources a media rep can bring to you is information on their **subscribers**. Many of the larger publications have in-house research departments that periodically conduct subscriber studies. These can provide you with standard demographic information such as age, educational level, income, marital status, and geographic location. In addition, these studies often include information on the reader's interest—their hobbies, involvements in specific activities, intention to buy certain products, etc. This information can help you decide which publications have the readers that are strong candidates to become your students.

Information on the **editorial direction** of the publication is also very valuable. Media reps can often provide rankings of the "most read" articles in their magazines. This again helps you to judge the interest level of the readers, and to decide if your courses would be of interest to this audience.

There is another resource that the media reps can provide that is even more valuable than the subscriber information and the editorial overview. **Advertiser success stories** are often the most reliable indicator of the responsiveness of a given magazine's audience. Ask the media rep the following questions:

- Does your magazine carry advertising from other home study schools? If so, determine which schools have run with them in the past; what size ads these schools have run, and how often they have run with that magazine in the past 24 months.

- Who are the ten advertisers that run with your publication most frequently?

- Which new advertisers have run in that publication in the past 24 months in at least three different issues?

There's no better indicator of the responsiveness of a publication than a steady schedule of advertising from a direct response advertiser. General (image) advertising is not as reliable an indicator—general advertisers are buying based primarily on audience size and demographics. A direct response advertiser is measuring the actual profitability of an ad—this is a far better indicator of the true effectiveness of a given publication.

You should also ask the media rep to help you to **differentiate** their magazine from the others in their category. Ask about the unique aspects of that publication—why would a reader select this publication as opposed to all the others in the field? Also seek to determine whether or not a given publication is the category leader—does it provide broad enough coverage to let you select it instead of two or three small publications to reach the same audience? Ask about their rate base (the number of guaranteed readers upon which advertising rates are based). Has the rate-base grown or declined over the past 24 months? Have new magazines entered their category? What changes in editorial direction, graphic layout, pricing, or other factors are planned for the coming

months? What is their duplication with other magazines in a category?

All of the above information can easily be exchanged in approximately 15 minutes. This is time well spent in order to help differentiate a specific magazine from all the others in a field, and to help you identify those magazines that have the best chance of giving you a qualified prospect.

Creative Assistance

The media rep you will be working with is probably familiar with the advertising of both your direct competitors and others who have had success in that magazine. Often, the rep will be able to help you design an ad which will permit your school to have success in their publication as well.

Media reps, either directly or through their in-house design department, may be able to provide assistance to you in selecting the proper size, layout, copy approach and other elements that will permit you to obtain prospects in that publication. Some publications will even do the actual layout for you, saving you time and money on your initial advertising investment.

Another way to use this creative assistance would be to have several rough layouts or ideas critiqued by the publication's in-house professionals. This would give you additional input on your advertising concepts to help increase the effectiveness of your planned ad. Again, this service is generally provided free of cost to you in order to induce you to advertise in a publication.

Even if you do not need the assistance of the magazine staff in helping you to design an ad, you still may want to show your current ads to the media rep. If nothing else, this will permit the rep to gain a better understanding of your advertising strategy, so the rep can better help you to determine the best way to utilize that publication. In this way, the time you spend with the media rep will be a true exchange of information, rather than you simply listening to his or her sales pitch. It's important for the rep to leave the meeting with a better understanding of your school, in addition to your increased knowledge of their publication.

Pricing Negotiations

Now that you have a better understanding of the potential of the magazine, you can begin discussing various rates the magazine may offer. Although many of these rates are listed on the standard rate card, there are often additional discounted rates that may be available.

The rate card is the standard "price list" offered by all magazines. It should be based upon a guaranteed circulation, comprised of both subscribers and newsstand readers. To substantiate the rates, most publications belong to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), or include a "publishers sworn statement" which verifies the preceding 12 months circulation of the magazine. In most media kits, you will find a copy of the "pink sheet" which provides numerous details pertaining to the prior 12 months circulation.

The rate card will provide you with information on prices charged for various size ads, and will include standard frequency discounts. In general, going from a one time to a three time frequency will provide approximately 3% discount, a six time frequency a 6% discount, etc. Some magazines offer much steeper frequency discounts than others, so you will need to compare the rates to determine for yourself the discounts offered for increasing your frequency in that magazine.

Ask the rep what the CPM (cost-per-thousand) is for the magazine. While this figure doesn't have much relevance by itself, it's a useful comparative figure. CPM states the cost of an ad per 1,000 paid copies of that publication. To keep it simple, be sure you always base the CPM on the same frequency and unit size in all publications, such as the one-time rate for a black and white page.

Be sure to inquire about various discounts the publication may make available to you. One of the standard discounts offered by many magazines is a **mail order** (or direct response) **discount**. This may range from 10- to 40%, but generally averages 15- to 20% below the general rates.

Other discounts may include a special discount for **schools or publishers**. Be sure they understand that you are a home study school, and that you certainly qualify for a school discount. Many publications will offer a **new advertiser** or a test discount rate, particularly if they are a smaller magazine, or the second or third

ranking publication in their category. This would be used as an enticement to get you to try their publication in the hopes that your ad works well and you will re-invest with them in the future. In addition, new magazines may offer a "**charter**" discount, a rate offered to advertisers who are willing to risk investing in a magazine when it's being launched. Unless the magazine is very highly targeted, you'll be better off waiting until the magazine has gained acceptance in the marketplace.

Another valuable discount is the **remnant** discount. This is a rate offered after closing, when a magazine has space available that they're willing to sell at a "distressed" or remnant rate. This can range from a 15- to a 50% discount off the normal rates. While often offered only on a page basis, some publications have remnants available in units as small as a 1/3 square page. Be sure to tell the rep that you are interested in any and all discounts that may be available.

Perhaps the most frequently offered discount is **frequency**. This is a discount offered to persuade advertisers to run more frequently in a publication. Media reps will often ask you to sign a three or six time frequency contract in order to "test" the magazine. Frequency most often works to the benefit of the publication rather than the advertiser. While publications do offer a small discount based upon increased frequency, advertisers have to measure this against the extra money you are spending to save an incremental amount. While frequency discounts are useful in a publication that is a proved winner, it's best to proceed with caution and contract for a specific frequency only after the initial ad or two has proved its benefit to your school.

Manage the Meeting

I'm always amazed to hear reps tell how rudely they're treated by many advertisers—particularly large agencies. This is unfortunate, since the magazine has invested in the salary of hiring a rep, and often pays the travel expenses for them to visit an advertiser at a distant location.

Advertisers need to remember that the rep's time is valuable, too. If an appointment is made, it should be kept unless an emergency precludes this.

A mistake some advertisers make is not properly managing the meeting with the rep. It's important to let the rep know how much time is available for your meeting (a half hour seems to work best in most cases); and to communicate clearly any questions or agenda you may have. This is where a preview of the media kit can work to your advantage.

If you feel the rep is discussing items that are not of interest to you, don't hesitate to let him or her know. It's not mandatory to sit through a 45 minute "show and tell" session just because that's the rep's standard pitch to large agencies. Be sure the rep is aware of your needs and desires, and targets the meeting toward them.

It's also useful to take notes during the meeting. The media kit is a great place to do this, since it's the one permanent record you'll probably keep from that publication. It's handy to write any questions regarding rates or to highlight special discounts right on the rate card; and to circle or mark up the pink sheet or other circulation information so that you'll remember key points or concerns at a future date.

You might find it useful to send off a brief letter restating your needs to the rep following the meeting. Perhaps you requested to be added to the complimentary copy list of the publication and want to remind them. The rep may have promised to send you copies of other ads discussed during the meeting. Perhaps you discussed a new rate or other item not covered in the rate card. Whatever the key items of interest to you, it will be worth sending off a brief note to remind the rep, and to thank him or her for taking the time visit your school.

Feedback

When you make your decision about advertising in a given magazine, it's useful to discuss this decision with the rep. If you decide not to run in the publication, you should let the rep know why. The problem could be price, a limited budget, poor compatibility between your course and the editorial of the magazine, or other reasons. Whatever the obstacle, there might be possible changes that would help to overcome this. Perhaps the price could be negotiated even lower. There may be a special issue that would more closely address your needs. If you let the rep know what the obstacle is, he or she can try to find a way to work with their publisher to overcome this.

If you decide to run in a publication, you may find it useful to discuss the eventual results for your ad with the rep. You do not have to disclose the exact numbers generated, but it's best to say more than "it worked," or "it didn't work." If you had marginal results, showing how the ad compared to others may help the rep to negotiate a better rate for you. If the ad worked well, you can obtain a discounted rate if you increase your advertising frequency. You'll have to decide how much information you're willing to divulge, but the more competitive information you have, the stronger your ability to negotiate a rate based upon **your** profitability needs.

Conclusion

The time spent in a brief, well organized meeting with the media rep may be one of the best investments you can make for your school. If the rep is aware of your needs, and brings answers or recommendations to the meeting, you'll find it to be one of the most convenient, informative, and profitable 30 minute meetings you're likely to encounter.

Whether you choose to "meet" with reps over the phone or in your office, you'll find them to have a wealth of information, and a valuable liaison between your school and the thousands of potential students that are readers of the magazine they represent.

Chapter Nine

Television Advertising

by
James K. Isenhour
Chairman, C.F.O.
Cambridge Academy

The Author

Kirk and his wife, Tanzee, are two of the founders of Cambridge Academy located in Ocala, Florida. He is currently Chairman and CEO of CCR, Inc., the parent company of Cambridge Academy, the Chief Financial Officer of Cambridge Academy, Inc., and Chief Executive Officer of Quantum Learning Systems, Inc., an interactive television and video production company.

Kirk's experience in television advertising comes from producing and placing Cambridge Academy's advertising program and his related business activities as CEO of Quantum Learning Systems.

Introduction

Ever since man first piled rocks to mark his trail and proclaim that intelligence had walked the path, he has looked at every medium of communication with the goal of improving the ability to "advertise" or direct messages to his fellow man.

With the invention of the radio, the first electronic means of sending messages to the masses, advertising took on a completely new and awesome dimension. Instead of printing a short block of words to communicate a product's value, the advertiser could now use a live voice to personalize his message. The pitch of a voice and the sheer volume of sound could conjure up images in the listener's mind to instill a desire for the advertiser's product

and thus create the need to have it. But even with such technology, visualizing the usefulness or desirability of a product required imagination until, that is, the invention of television.

Television was an advertiser's dream come true. Now, instead of merely mastering language to portray a message, the virtual image could be presented in such a way as to become imbedded in the psyche of the viewer. Television could make the intangible real.

An advertiser's message could now be placed directly in the consumer's home or office (even on an airplane). Anywhere the consumer went, there also could be the advertiser's image. More importantly, that image could be created to short-circuit the imagination and directly reach the "heart" of the potential buyer, resulting in the image actually defining the buyer's needs.

Never before in history has an invention had such a profound effect on all of mankind. In fact, the saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words" became truth. But with such an impact comes another truth . . . "what you see is what you get."

There is no doubt that television is the most exciting delivery vehicle you can use to market your school or create a corporate image. But, when developing your marketing plan, understand that television alone may not be the total answer to successful advertising.

Advertising should be approached on a multimedia level. The purpose of a full-spectrum advertising campaign is to firmly establish the recognition of your product. The most successful advertising programs combine television, printed media, direct mail, radio and any other form of advertising that has worked before.

To view a television commercial, followed by a printed advertisement, direct mail flyer, or an article in the news, allows for the development of name recognition and a sense of security. When the product is education, the use of a multimedia advertising campaign helps to establish your school's integrity and longevity. With this in mind, be aware that as you develop your advertising campaign, especially when using television commercials, you will be promoting not only your school's image, but that of the NHSC and other member schools with which you are associated. The quality of your commercial, and the style in which you deliver

your message will establish your image and have a direct result in the success of your efforts.

One of the best ways to begin developing your television campaign is to pay close attention to other commercials. The success of your commercial can be affected by its association with other related industry commercials and from companies offering similar products. Many times, when I talk about our school and draw a blank look from my audience, I ask if they have seen the ICS television commercial with Sally Struthers. With the usual reply of "yes," I go on to explain how our school is similar to the one Ms. Struthers described. This typeof TV commercial builds a comfortable sense of recognition of home study for most audiences.

Your commercial can project an image your public will not forget. What you say and how you say it will affect what your public will think of you. To understand this from a practical point of view, consider the commercial style known as the "Car Dealer's Special" compared to "public service" commercials. I'm sure you can visualize these two types of commercials; each has its place . . . but what do you think of a car dealer?

There are three basic elements to the development of a successful television campaign:

1. Production of the commercials

2. Buying television time

3. Servicing the leads generated by the commercials

Production of Commercials

Many, especially those in the television advertising industry, believe that the only way to produce an effective, quality commercial is to use a professional agency. While it is true that much of the process of production such as filming, sound, and editing must done through a professional production company, often a creative team of your own employees can come up with the best settings and scripts. The feel for what will work to reach your potential students could be right under your own roof. It is always helpful to secure the help of a professional writer. Through their creative expertise, your ideas and messages can be successfully conveyed to the market.

If you choose to use an advertising agency to script and stage the setting of your commercial, before you contract with the agency, you will want to explain your school, your goals and objectives, and your market. Require that the agency present four or five ideas for your review. If you are impressed by their creative approach, go with it. If not, find another agency and start over. This process should be at no cost unless you use any of the creative work presented. Once you decide on an agency, always maintain control of the content and require your approval before airing the finished commercial.

Commercials are usually presented in one of two ways: by a spokesperson or by example. When developing your television advertising program, it is best to produce a series of commercials using each of these styles so that you may appeal to several markets.

When choosing a spokesperson, many tend to believe that you must hire professional actors or "known" personalities in order to achieve your goals. The cost of the spokesperson is directly proportional to their "star quality" and whether the commercial is for national or regional airing. While it is true that star quality has an effect, consider what I call the "Lee Iacocca" option. How were you affected when the Chairman of Chrysler stood up for his product? John Wayne may not have been as effective. Look into your own pocket of talent first—it could save a pocketful of money!

An example-styled commercial uses settings with voice over. This type of commercial usually has more impact because it allows the viewer to put himself in the position of the person in the commercial. For instance, showing scenes of successful graduates with good jobs, with a narrator explaining how they achieved their goals, allows potential students to see themselves doing the same.

Watching a student who is smiling and happy at work makes the viewer think and feel that they too, would enjoy studying and taking your course. Another very powerful form of example-styled commercials are real life testimonials. Because people can identify with these commercials, they are very successful in motivating your audience.

After the scripts and settings of your commercial series is completed, you are ready to shoot the video. Here, the professional

expertise of a video production company is required. Their service is usually contracted on an hourly basis with rates varying between $450 to $800 per hour for filming and $250 to $400 per hour for editing. On occasion, it is possible to contract a set price for complete production. This can be a good situation, provided the objectives are clearly stated and no additional charges will be applied for the normal changes that will occur before a finished commercial airs. Usually, if you carefully plan, organize, and follow through with your production program, the hourly rates will end up costing less than a contract, and actually give you much more for your money.

When working on an hourly rate, plan ahead with the knowledge that it takes a lot of time to set up "a shoot." Since this is true, try to maximize a setting. Perhaps it is possible to shoot several segments of different commercials on the same stage. For instance, should you use the shot of a student studying at a desk, shoot several different actors, changing the desk or the materials on the desk with each new shot instead of the changing the complete set? Also, once a setting is staged, film as much extra material as you can for future commercials. Consider this: shooting footage is usually three to four times more expensive than editing. Often, with just a little planning, enough material can be taped to produce several other commercials just by editing.

Again, the success and cost of your shoot takes planning and attention to detail. Scheduling actors to be on the set on time, and providing them plenty of water to drink, are just a few of the details to consider. A small item that can mean a lot is clothing. Try to stay away from stripes and the color red; it could mean the difference between a professional, film quality commercial or a bust, no matter what the setting.

Editing is the least expensive part of the program provided you do two things. The first is to know each scene of the commercial that goes with the script. The second is to review the film log before you get to the studio. The film log gives you the digital coordinates of the completed scenes "in the can." A tremendous amount of time can be spent trying to find the right shot for the scene. If your homework has been done before the edit, the time can be spent selecting the right shot and frame instead of looking for the correct block of film.

If your commercials are to be set to music, listen to music scores

before the edit session. The final selection cannot be made until the commercial is finished, but if you have listened to several disks you may relate the music to the commercial for a head start in choosing the score. Another way to save costs is to prepare an outline of any computer graphics or special effects you may want to use. Computer graphics and special effects should then be digitized before the edit session. These functions are usually billed at a separate rate.

During editing, I recommend that you or one of your creative team attend the sessions and help develop the final commercial. One special effect that can "make" a commercial is called the "ADO" (for the layman, this is how the scenes break). Fade-outs, paging, flip screen, point-to-page and all those fancy things you see your television screen do during commercials, are programmed into your commercial at the edit. If, during the session, you do not like a set of frames or the timing of the frames, make the changes right then, even if it requires starting over or choosing alternative shots. It is much less expensive to make changes **during** the initial edit than to return to the studio at a later date.

The last part of the editing process is deciding how to "CG" or "Chyron" the final commercial. This is the process of putting a phone number in the commercial. You may choose to have your telephone number appear during the commercial, at the end of the commercial, or for the entire duration of the commercial. Any of these will work. However, the number appearing during the entire commercial gives the viewer more time to find a pencil and paper and write the number down.

Once everything is complete, make two masters: one with the Chyron and one without. If you change telephone numbers and you have a blank master, it saves hundreds of dollars more than the cost of the blank master.

Buying Television Time

There are three types of television markets which make sense to a typical NHSC school advertiser. These are: regional broadcast stations, national cable stations and cable systems. Often, when we think of television commercials, we tend to think about the three national networks: NBC, ABC and CBS. These stations are much too expensive for national buys. For example, to air one thirty second, network commercial during a prime time television series could cost $100,000 or more.

Broadcast stations are regional stations that send their signals over the airwaves or through regional cable systems and cover a limited viewing area, such as Channel 10, Miami; Channel 35, Orlando; Channel 9, Charlotte; or Channel 6, New York, which are all well known regional stations. **Regional stations** are usually affiliated with one of the major television networks like ABC or FOX and offer some of the best commercial buys available.

National cable stations are stations that send their programming to cable systems throughout the nation via satellite. Stations such as Turner Broadcasting, The Family Channel, WWGN, Channel 9 in Chicago, Lifetime and Discovery are all national cable stations. Stations such as TBS or WWGN have both regional and national cable markets. When buying time, an advertiser can purchase one or both of the markets covered above—each with its own published rates.

Cable systems are not television stations at all. They are transmission systems which provide television programming such as Cox Cable. These systems have commercial spots available on every channel they provide. The cost is very low and can be as little as $5 for a thirty second spot. With this low price, however, come two unique problems.

Usually, the commercial spots available on cable systems come at the hour or half-hour break. This is the time when programs change or, as is the case with an hour program, the time every viewer in America seems to go to the bathroom. Some of the best and most entertaining commercials running could not keep John or Jane in their seat during those precious few seconds. When programs are over, the viewer either scans for the next program or turns the television off. The viewer who just tuned in is busy getting the popcorn ready or taking a "before the program" bathroom break. Your commercial may be airing to an empty seat.

Another problem associated with advertising on cable systems is that they are restricted in viewer demographics. Cable systems are confined to their particular service area or perhaps to an individual town or even a small community within the town. Therefore, only those who subscribe to that specific system will see your commercial. Should the system's area be limited in the scope or diversity of potential viewers, the impact of your commercial could be minimal. This is easily demonstrated by an experience we had at Cambridge Academy.

Cambridge once placed an 80-commercial buy with a system in Plantation, Florida, to advertise our high school program. The commercials were to air for one week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and were to be spread out over seven stations carried by that system. The community consisted of middle to upper middle class households. The total cost of this series was only $600 dollars. However, the cost per lead was also $600. Through the entire run, we received only one response who, by the way, did not enroll. Why? Well, most of our viewers did not need our product and those who did were out looking for work or out on a bathroom break. Had we advertised a "how to garden" or "tools to carry in your BMW" tape, we would have had a winner!

Cable systems can work for some products, but it is extremely important that you study carefully the demographics of the viewer and the size of the serviced area. Cheap prices for commercial time can turn into an expensive lesson.

Always test your markets. Before making any television buys, first test your series of commercials using a regional broadcast station. For instance, if you were located in Florida, you could choose a Fox affiliate station like Channel 35 in Orlando or Channel 44 in Tampa. By running a test market, you will be able to monitor the response to individual commercials and different times. The test market should be run for 30 to 45 days, varying the times and sequence of commercials. This information will be very important in determining an advertising schedule and where to advertise. Many national cable stations require this test market information before they will air your commercial.

Once you are ready to start your advertising campaign, continually log and study the response and conversion rate of your advertising using the test market as a benchmark. If certain times or stations do not perform, change or cancel the air times. Most money wasted in television advertising is spent by not knowing or not reacting to the response or lack of response to placed commercials. One thing to remember is that even though television produces an instantaneous response, the number of phone calls per commercial series increases over time. The longer you consistently advertise, and the more times you run your series, the greater the response.

When you are ready to choose the type of station that will air your

commercials, you must also choose the type of airtime to purchase for your commercial spots. Each station publishes a rate chart that lists programming times and rates. Usually rates are quoted for two types of airing spots; one is called **Program Time Slots** (PTS) and the other is ROS, which stands for **Run of Schedule.**

Program Time Slots are airtimes for commercials during a specific program of your choosing. For example, you may choose to air your commercial during the show *Home Improvement* at the 8:23 p.m. slot. The rate for PTS spots are the highest rates the station charges and are determined by time and the program's ratings. A thirty second PTS spot on a regional channel runs anywhere from $100 for a commercial placed during the "All Night Movies" to $2,500 for the same spot placed during a prime time series. A thirty second PTS spot on a national cable station would run between $250 and $5,000, based on the particular program.

The ROS rate is based on the station "filling in" their schedule with your commercial. This is determined at the beginning of the broadcast day, when the station knows which commercial air times have been purchased. For example, if no one has purchased the 8:12 p.m. spot during *Home Improvement*, an advertiser on the ROS schedule will be placed in that time slot. Spots are rated by time period only, not by the program ratings, which makes ROS the best advertising buy available. Rates on a regional broadcast station usually run from $25 for a thirty second spot aired between 12:01 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. to $250 for the same spot aired between 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. The same ROS commercial on a national cable station would cost $150 for a 12:01 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. airtime, and can cost as much as $3,500.00 for a 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. airtime.

There is one last and very important consideration for NHSC members to be aware of when deciding how and where to place television advertising. Many states have enacted laws regulating schools in their state. A home study school based in one state can be made to adhere to the laws, taxes or special funds of another state, if the school is said to "target" the citizens of that state. Regional advertising does target a specific area and thus could bring the school under the requirement to comply with the laws of the state in which the area is home. National advertising through a national cable station cannot be considered targeting of a specific region or citizen.

Servicing the Response

One very important thing to remember when advertising on television is to be prepared! A well placed television commercial can have the effect of simultaneously impacting the emotions of thousands of people who respond. As a result, your phones will begin to "ring off the hook."

From my first hand experience at Cambridge Academy, every time our commercials aired on regional cable stations, Cambridge received an average of 25 to 60 calls; commercials aired on national cable channels produced between 50 and 400 calls. When Cambridge Academy ran a series of 230 commercials on the Turner Broadcasting Network, over a three month period we received 13,158 inquiries from potential students. Even after the commercials stopped airing, Cambridge continued to receive another 350 inquiries. ICS advertises on a full scale and receives about tens of thousands of inquiries a month. This kind of response can strain anyone's telemarketing division.

To handle the response generated by your commercials, you will need to decide to either increase your call/answer capability, or hire an outside answering service. If it is possible to expand your telephone system to handle the increased telephone calls, I believe an in-house telemarketing team can increase the conversion ratio of your inquiries (leads/enrollments) as well as lower the telephone expenses compared to an outside company answering or servicing the leads. In-house telemarketing also enables you to exercise greater control over how your calls are handled and what is said during the initial contact with potential new students.

If you decide to develop or expand your in-house telemarketing department, the least expensive way to upgrade your telephone system is by installing "T-1 Trunk Lines." T-1 lines allow you to connect long distance phone calls through a special carrier that bypasses the local telephone carrier. I have found that companies such as National Telephone or LDDS can supply long distance service (using T-1 Trunk Lines) for around 9.5 cents per minute compared to 23 cents per minute for regular 800 service.

As Cambridge increased its advertising, we decided to hire an outside telemarketing service to handle our leads. Their base charge was 39 cents per minute for the call, plus 35 cents to convert to labels and other charges for transferring the leads to our

computer database. Our total cost for a one minute telephone inquiry was approximately 78 cents per inquiry. Unfortunately, there was never a typical one minute call which resulted in our 13,158 leads costing almost $30,000 to answer. We are now setting up our own telemarketing department!

If you plan to contract with such a service, expect to incur additional costs and beware some of the pitfalls associated therein. Bad addresses and duplicate addresses, not all the fault of the operators (some viewers call several times and repeat their address), are transmitted and charged for all the time.

Limited software capabilities and a constant change over of telephone operators may also limit the number and accuracy of calls taken. Also, operators with limited knowledge about your product may mislead or confuse the caller.

Once you have the leads in hand, service them promptly. Remember that **television viewers are impulse buyers**. For television to become a profitable source of advertising, the leads your commercials produce must be worked while the potential students still have the image of your service fresh in their mind. Realize that the leads generated by television advertising, although great in volume, **are the least qualified** compared to the response received from most other forms of marketing. As with all forms of advertising, continue working the leads. Each time you mail a follow-up you should receive a 1.5% to 2% response. The better and longer you work them, the greater the response.

Conclusion

After you have considered all of the variables concerning television commercials, in the final analysis, your advertising campaign must be multimedia in scope in order to provide the optimum return from your advertising dollars. Always, when placing any advertising, monitor that it actually ran, the individual and overall response, and the conversion and course completion ratios. With this information you can make the right decisions at the right time to maximize the effectiveness of your advertising campaign.

Whatever you decide, keep in mind that the volume of calls generated from television advertising can be very profitable and worthwhile. Alone or combined with other forms of advertising,

ning a television advertising strategy offers you the unique opportunity to reach a multitude of people to whom you may offer your products and services. If you catch them at the right moment, they will prove to be well worth your efforts, demonstrating that television can be a valuable addition to your advertising strategy.

A Suggested Reading List for Home Study Marketers

by Axel Andersson

Ask ten top direct marketers, "What are your most important sources of direct marketing information?" and the majority will spontaneously answer "I learned most by studying my mail. I am on the mailing lists of the smartest mailers. My best teachers are the mailings I see repeated continuously over a long period of time."

"And how about books?"

"Yes, of course there are a number of important books. Those books gave me the basics, the fundamentals that told me the ground rules, showed me what to look for in the mailings I get and in the ads I read."

Ask another group, the top copywriters in direct marketing. They will tell you, "My swipe file is my treasure. The ads, the mailings, that I have collected over a number of years are the first source I turn to when I get a new assignment. Why reinvent the wheel when I can study the results of hundreds of tests that produced what top direct marketers spent hundreds of millions of dollars on?"

What are these basic books? You will find them listed below. These basic books and two or three direct marketing publications are the first step for anyone who takes this business seriously. Make sure you get on the mailing lists of direct marketers, particularly those marketers that are important in your field. Try to find out who are the real pros producing the ads and the mailings that can help you most.

Start with some of the books that convey the adventure and spirit of direct marketing. For instance, for direct mail, Richard Benson's *Secret of Successful Direct Mail*, $19.95. It offers you a wealth of background information, factual examples which only a top person in his or her field can give. This book also gives you an idea of opportunities in direct marketing. Dick Benson's "31 Rules of Thumb" offer succinct recommendations for improving any mailing.

Probably the most-recommended book on space advertising is John Caples' *Tested Advertising Methods*, $10.95, recommended by Ogilvy, Schwartz, Sackheim, Rapp, Collins, and others. His other books should also be required reading for anyone in space advertising: *Making Ads Pay*, 1957, $6.95; and *How to Make Advertising Make Money*, 1983, $9.94.

You should also read David Ogilvy's book, *Confessions of an Advertising Man*, $9.95; Eugene Schwartz, *Breakthrough Advertising*, $50; and Robert Collier, *The Robert Collier Letter Book*, $39.95.

One of the greatest books on copwriting is out of print but may be available through inter-library loans—Victor O. Schwab, *How To Write a Good Advertisement*, 1962.

No reading list in direct marketing is complete without the "Bible," Bob Stone's *Successful Direct Marketing Methods*, 1988, $34.95. From beginner to the seasoned pro, it belongs in every direct marketer's library. It includes in depth case studies and chapters on mailing lists, magazines, newspapers, broadcasts, co-ops, telemarketing, techniques of creating print advertising, and testing.

One of the ten best direct marketing books is Jim Kobs' *Profitable Direct Marketing*, 1991, $47.95. The all new second edition covers aspects of launching and building a direct marketing business. Two appendices, "The Mathematics of Planning Profitable Mailings," and "99 Proven Direct Response Offers" have been very helpful to thousands over the years. Read it together with Stone's book and you will also learn direct marketing from the entrepreneurial point of view. For hands-on work by creative professionals, I recommend Susan K. Jones, *Creative Strategy in Direct Marketing*, $39.95. Another excellent book is Joan Throckmorton's *Winning Direct Response Advertising, How to Recognize It, Evaluate It, Inspire It, Create It*, 1986, $18.95. Don't miss her two chapters entitled "Nurturing Creative Concepts: How to Sharpen Your Creative Judgment and Grow a Concept" and "Creating the Direct Mail Package."

Other recommended books:

Edward L. Nash, *The Direct Marketing Handbook*, 1984 (especially the chapter "Writing Headlines"). Also by Nash, *The Direct Marketing Handbook*, 1992.

Ed Burnett, *The Complete Direct Mail List Handbook*, 1988, $59.95. (Recommended by every pro in direct marketing. Tips on the rules of testing, the mathematics of two-step and continuation plans, how to interpret test results and what to do about them, and what it costs to "buy" a customer.)

For your swipe file you probably already track the mailings and ads from your closest competitors, but you will learn far more by studying what the direct marketers outside the home study field are doing. Probably the savviest direct mailers are some of the book and record clubs and companies like Career Track, Handgun Control, International Masters, Maryland Bank of North America, National Republican Senatorial Committee, National Rifle Association, Spiegel, United Services Automobile Association (USAA) and Williams Sonoma.

For your swipe file you also need Denison Hatch's *Million Dollar Mailing$*, 1993, $89; and also *Who's Mailing What!* from 401 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19108, a monthly newsletter, $168.

Recommended magazines:

Direct, Hanson Publishing Group, Inc., 911 Hope Street, 6 River Bend Center, Stamford, CT 06907, $64 per year.

Direct Marketing Magazine, Hoke Communications, Inc., 224 Seventh Street, Garden City, NY 11530, $52 per year.

DM News, Mill Hollow Corporation, 11 W. 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036, $75 per year.

Target Marketing Magazine, North American Publishing Company, 401 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19108, $65 per year.

Who's Mailing What! Denison Hatch, 401 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19108, published ten times a year, $168.

The Month Newsletter, Analysis and Record of the Direct Marketing Archive.

Dose all this seem like too much to absorb? Don't answer that question before you have read some of the books listed above. If you haven't fallen in love with direct marketing after studying five books, maybe it's time to . . .

But, if you are intrigued by the opportunities direct marketing offers, you will be looking forward to all the information you can get from the brightest minds in this, one of the most fascinating lines of business in the world.

Other NHSC Handbooks

In 1993, the National Home Study Council revised its other two handbooks, *Home Study Student Services Handbook*, 2nd Edition, and *Home Study Course Development Handbook*, 3rd Edition.

Student Services Handbook—

This practical Handbook discusses the how-to's of student services. Topics include:

- Total Quality Management
- Organizing the Student Services Department
- Supervising Instructional Staff
- The Record Keeping Function
- Communicating with Your Students
- Testing and Student Services
- Grading Student Assignments
- Motivating Students

Course Development Handbook—

This 13-chapter Handbook is a collection of current, practical, and essential guides on how to develop a correspondence course. Topics include:

- Supervising Course Authors
- Writing Examinations
- Designing a Home Study Course
- How to Develop a Degree Program
- Managing Text Readability
- Total Quality Manuscripts
- Motivation through Interaction and Media
- Desktopping Great Looking Courses
- Preparing Instructional Objectives
- Financial Analysis in Course Development

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All order must be prepaid. Please make check payable to "NHSC" and send with this form to: Publications, NHSC, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Doing business without advertising is like winking at someone in the dark; you know what you're doing, but nobody else does.

Britt Henderson
***New York Herald Tribune*, 1956**

National Home Study Council
1601 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 234-5100

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